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A most excellent view

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THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES THE FIRST

BY

JOHN BURNET

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

IN TWO VOLUMES

LONDON

Printed by J. Streater, at the Sign of the Gun, in St. Dunstons Church-yard

1679

By Authority

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THE
USE OF SACRED HISTORY;

ESPECIALLY AS ILLUSTRATING AND CONFIRMING

THE
GREAT DOCTRINES OF REVELATION.

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED,

TWO DISSERTATIONS;

THE FIRST, ON THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE HISTORY CONTAINED
IN THE PENTATEUCH, AND IN THE BOOK OF JOSHUA ;—THE
SECOND, PROVING THAT THE BOOKS ASCRIBED TO MOSES WERE
ACTUALLY WRITTEN BY HIM, AND THAT HE WROTE THEM BY
DIVINE INSPIRATION.

TWO VOLUMES IN ONE.

BY JOHN JAMIESON, D. D. F. A. S. S.
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, EDINBURGH.

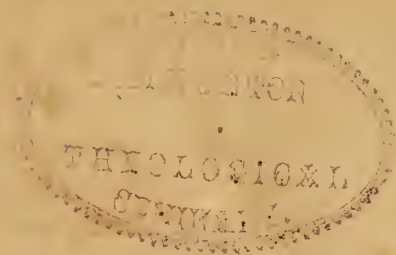
VOL. I.

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IT has often occurred to the Author, that as it could not be without a special design that so great a portion of the Holy Scriptures was cast into an Historical form, the principal reason of this must be, that it appeared to Him, who "knoweth our frame," the most proper mode of conveying instruction, even on those subjects in which we are interested for eternity. Under the forcible impression of this idea, the Author engaged in the following work. Whatever may be said with respect to the execution, the plan at least has the commendation of novelty. For, as far as he knows, the ground which he has taken has been hitherto unoccupied.

It was not originally meant, that the two Dissertations prefixed should be published in connexion with the work on Sacred History. They were written at a time, when the greatest exertions were made to disseminate the principles of Infidelity. Instead of publishing these by themselves, the Author, after the plan of the other work was laid, thought it might be better to reserve them as an Introduction. This seemed the more necessary, as a disposition to raze foundations

had become so prevalent, that a work, professedly on the Use of Sacred History, might to some appear defective, if nothing were premised with respect to its Evidence.

As every one, who has the Bible in his hands, is deeply interested in the subject of this work ; it has been the aim of the Author, as far as possible, to adapt the work itself to every class of readers. If any thing contained in it, oppose the prejudices of those who profess to be the friends of Revelation, he begs, for their own sake, that they will not rashly condemn the doctrine, but fairly try it by the unerring standard, with an humble dependence on that SPIRIT, who is promised to guide into all truth.

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DISSERTATION I.

ON THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE HISTORY CONTAINED IN THE
PENTATEUCH, AND IN THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

THE scriptural history constitutes a leading part of the evidence of the truth of our holy religion. This evidence rests on matters of fact, as proved beyond all reasonable exception. Miracles and prophecy have still been considered as supplying two powerful arguments for the truth of revelation. Both these are resolvable into historical proof. It is the sacred history that informs us of these miracles? and the truth of a great part of the prophecies is incontrovertibly demonstrated by the facts recorded in Scripture. For it contains not merely those prophecies which respected the church, or the world, for more than four thousand years; but the history of their completion.

Such is the evidence of the truth of this history, that it cannot be rationally denied. This will appear, whether we consider the history of Israel as a nation, or the account of those great events, of an earlier date, which more immediately concern mankind in general.

Some of the most strenuous efforts of the adversaries of our faith, have been directed against the authenticity of the five books of Moses. One thing, however, is certain. If it appear, upon impartial examination, that the great and leading circumstances recorded in these books, concerning the Israelites, really took place;—that they were delivered from Egypt by a display of divine power, that they passed through the Red Sea as on dry land, that they received the law from the midst of the flames of Mount Sinai, that they were miraculously supported for forty years in the wilderness, and that the waters of Jordon were divided before them;—there can be no ground to doubt that their religion was from God. But there is a variety of evidence, which must fully satisfy every candid and unprejudiced mind, as to the truth of these astonishing events.

I. Had not the Israelites been fully assured of the truth of those things, which are recorded in the books of Moses, concerning them as a people, they would never have acknowledged the authenticity of these writings, even in an historical light ; far less would they have received them as divinely inspired, and as the only rule of their faith and manners.

It cannot justly be said, that the biblical history ascribes such high antiquity to the Israelites as a nation, that they might hence have been induced to receive it, although convinced that it was false ; in the same manner as heathen nations have received the fables of their poets, who have flattered their pride by tracing up their origin to the gods. For this very history, which records the origin of Israel, ascribes far higher antiquity to the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Assyrians, the Midianites, the Canaanites, and a variety of other nations that were enemies to the Israelites, and the objects of their aversion. The account given of their origin, therefore, so far from gaining their favour, must rather had a tendency to prejudice them.

It may be alleged, however, that the distinguishing honour here ascribed to the Israelites, of being selected as a peculiar people to God, and the relation given of the many mighty works he is said to have wrought in their behalf, might have operated as motives sufficiently powerful, for making them receive an history which they knew to be false. But it must be remembered, that this honour is counterbalanced by a circumstance, than which nothing can be imagined more humiliating to man. They are assured on every occasion, that God did not choose them because of any superior excellency in their national character, but merely from his own good pleasure. That doctrine, the sovereignty of election, which has in every age been so great a stumbling-block to individuals, is directed against their pride as a nation, without any exception.

Nor is this all. They are frequently reminded of their unspeakable unworthiness to enjoy the distinguishing honour of being God's peculiar people, and informed, that its continuance is entirely owing to divine mercy, long-suffering and forgiveness. Their history, as a nation, is nearly an uninterrupted narrative of their murmurings and rebellions against that God who had so signally manifested his love to them. The astonishing deliverances, which make so distinguished a figure in this historical exhibition, seem to rise up in the striking picture, merely to throw a deeper shade on the national character and conduct. While yet a single family, in their cruelty towards the Shechemites, and even to one of their own brethren, they appear as a nest of traitors and murderers. In Egypt, we find them a nation of abject slaves. They are represented as tempting God in the wilderness, during forty years. Nor does their character assume a more favourable aspect, after they are brought to the possession of Canaan.

Whether subject to judges or to kings, they still appear prone to rebel against their supreme Lord.

Is it by such a narrative as this, that a writer of fictions would attempt to gain credit with a nation, whose history he pretended to record ! Is it thus that he would try to touch the strings of the heart ? Would he in this manner endeavour to call in their national pride to his aid, by mortally wounding it in almost every fact that he related ? If the historians of Israel succeeded by such means, they afford a solitary instance in history ;—an instance so extraordinary, and so diametrically opposite to all the ordinary workings of human nature, that we could scarcely suppose it to have taken place without the intervention of a miracle.

What end could an historian mean to serve, by giving an account of Jacob's supplanting Esau, if it had not been fact ? It must have had a worse effect than even that of fixing a perpetual stigma on the character of one of the most illustrious progenitors of the nation. For it tended to expose his posterity to the hereditary hatred of the Edomites. Would the Israelites have assented to such a relation, had they not been assured that it was true ?

The history of this people is interspersed with a great variety of the most severe denunciations against them, if they should be chargeable with those very sins which are at the same time recorded. Can it be imagined, that they would assent not only to such an history, but to such denunciations of divine vengeance ; that they would assent to both, at the very time that their conduct, on the supposition of the truth of these records, exposed them to the threatened punishment ; had they been convinced that the whole was a mere fabrication ? Would any people be at such pains to suborn evidence against themselves ?

It may be said, however, that although the Israelites believed the history of the great events concerning them as a nation, they were duped by designing men who wrought on their ignorance and credulity. In reply to this, it may be observed,

II. That the history of these things could never have gained credit with the great body of the nation, had it not been indisputably true. The Israelites could never have believed, that they sojourned in Egypt ; that they were delivered from their bondage in that country by a striking display of divine power ; that the Red sea was divided to give them a passage ; that they were miraculously supported for forty years in the wilderness ; and that they were made to walk dry shod through Jordan, in their way to the promised land ;—they could never have believed these things, unless they had actually taken place.

The enemies of revelation pretend, that the books of Moses must have been written in a far later period than that to which they have been commonly assigned. They are by no means

agreed as to the period. Some insinuate, that they were unknown to the Israelites before their return from the captivity. But it is inconceivable, that they could have been imposed on the nation in the time of Ezra. He and his fellows, in a general assembly of the people, "read in the book of the law of Moses, "from the morning until mid-day." This could not have been the first time that this book was known to them. For it was in compliance with the request of all the people that it was brought forth*. We learn from the book of Ezra, that at the time of the dedication of the temple, in the sixth year of Darius, the priests and Levites were settled in their different functions, "as it is "written in the book of Moses†." Now, this could not have been done, had there been no written copies of the law among the Jews. But this was about sixty years before Ezra came to Jerusalem‡. Many of the old men who had seen the glory of the first temple, wept when they saw the second. Had Ezra made any material alterations in the book of the law, these would not easily have escaped them. Their enemies the Samaritans received the five books of Moses, and therefore pretended that they sought the God of the Jews||. Now so inveterate was their enmity, that they took every advantage against those who returned from the captivity, and used every mean to prevent the re-establishment of their religion. But had there been the least reason to suppose that Ezra had corrupted, not to say fabricated, the Pentateuch, it would have been a better ground of crimination than any thing they could have thought of. When they saw all the means which they employed, with the kings of Persia, against the Jews, eventually frustrated, they certainly would not have let slip so excellent an occasion for dividing them amongst themselves. Nay, had any among the Jews had the least reason to suppose, that the ministers of religion obtruded a fictitious or adulterated law upon them ; no bribe could have imposed silence on the people, when so many of them were put to the severe trial of parting with their wives, and putting away their children, in conformity to the precepts of this very law.

But, indeed, it cannot be denied, that there were copies of the law among the captives while they were in Babylon. Such was the notoriety of this fact, that their heathen oppressors were no strangers to it. Hence Artaxerxes, in the decree which he made in favour of Ezra, speaks of the law of his God as "in his "hands.§ Long before his time, Daniel, while in captivity, was provided with a written copy of the law.¶

It cannot be supposed that this law was fabricated by Daniel, or by any of the captives, during their residence in Chaldea. For Daniel refers to the book of the prophecies of Jeremiah, as in the

* Neh. viii. 1.—3.

† See Prideaux's Con. Part I. book 5.

§ Ezra vii. 14.

† Ezra vi. 15.—18.

¶ Ezra iv. 2.

¶ Dan. ix. 11—13.

hands of the captives in Babylon, and as the source of his own information with respect to the duration of the captivity. Now, it is evident from the whole tenor of these prophecies, the greatest part of which were written before the commencement of the captivity, that the law of Moses was acknowledged, even by the most daring transgressors of it, as existing at the time that Jeremiah foretold the desolations of Jerusalem. For he frequently declared, that the calamities threatened would come upon them, because of their transgressions of this law. He made this appeal to the law, as confirmed to their fathers by many signs and wonders. He did so, not in a corner, but at the gates of Jerusalem; that his warnings might be heard by all who entered the city, or went out from it; by the kings, princes and people, who came hither for judgment.* Had he appealed to a law, which they had never seen, those whose measures he opposed could have been at no loss for a reply. His warnings, it would appear, were in one instance attended with so good an effect, that King Zedekiah commanded that liberation of Hebrew servants which the law enjoined. To this both the princes and people at first unanimously agreed. They knew they were bound to it by that law which they acknowledged as divine. When their covetousness afterwards prevailed with them to reclaim their bond-servants, although Jeremiah accused them of a wilful transgression of the covenant made with their fathers, we have not the slightest evidence that they attempted to vindicate their conduct by a denial of his assertion.† Nay, although the whole prophecies of Jeremiah were read to all the people assembled at Jerusalem, on a day of public fasting, and afterwards to the princes, they never denied the truth of his accusations. The princes, on the contrary, were all filled with fear.‡

If the books of Moses were ever artfully imposed on the posterity of Jacob, it could not be under any of the wicked kings of Judah. For they apostatized from the worship of God, and persecuted those who adhered to it. As the majority of the people joined in the apostacy, it is inconceivable, that a persecuted handful could impose on the body of the nation. As little could this imposition take place, during any of the good kings who succeeded Solomon in the kingdom of Judah. They had so many abuses to reform, so many monuments of idolatry to demolish; and their conduct must have so deeply affected the humour, the superstition or the interest of the greatest part of their subjects; that they could not possibly have prevailed on them to receive fictitious books as true.

From the account given of the finding of the book of the law in the temple, when it was repaired during the reign of Josiah||,

* Jer. xvii. 19—22.; xxxii. 20—23. † Jer. xxxiv. 8—18.

‡ Jer. xxxvi. 6—16.

|| 2 Kings xxii. 8.; 2 Chron. xxxiv, 14.

infidels may infer, that this was the first time that any book, ascribed to Moses, was known to the Jews, and that it was then imposed on the multitude by the policy of the king, or at least by the influence of priestcraft. But, although the awful denunciations of judgments in this book, which were represented as impending on the nation, should not be supposed sufficient to have prevented them from submitting to the imposture ; their warm attachment to that idolatry, which had been so firmly established during the wicked reign of Manasseh, would have prompted them to oppose any innovation, had there been the least reason to suspect imposition. Can it be supposed, that this was a state trick, or a piece of priestcraft, and yet that “all the idolatrous priests,” the priests of Baal, and of the high places, who were “put down” by Josiah,* were entirely silent on the occasion ? “The priests of the high places” did not embrace the religion established by the king, as appears from their not “coming up to the altar of the Lord at Jerusalem.”† Now, is it credible, that they should not have formed a party among the people, had they so much as insinuated, that the book of the law was an imposition ? But we know, that Josiah “made all that were present in Israel to serve, even to serve the Lord their God ;” and that “all his days they departed not from following the Lord, the God of their fathers.‡

But if any one should still wonder, that the book of the law should be for a time unknown even to Josiah ; let him remember, that on the same authority on which he believes this, he is also bound to believe, that this very book was well known throughout Judah, in the reign of Jehoshaphat, nearly three centuries before. For, “in the third year of his reign, he sent to his princes, even to Ben-hail, and to Obadiah, and to Zechariah, and to Nethaneel, and to Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah. “And with them he sent Levites, even Shemaiah, and Nethaniah, “and Zebadiah, and Asabel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehonathan, “and Adonijah, and Tobijah, and Tob-adonijah, Levites ; and “with them Elishama, and Jehoram, priests. And they taught “in Judah, and had the book of the law of the Lord with them, “and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught “the people.”|| So well known was this important fact, that not only the very year of the reign in which it took place, but the orders and names of all the missionaries employed, were particularly recorded in the Jewish annals.

It is inconceivable indeed, that such a forgery could have been executed any time after the revolt of the ten tribes. For such was their hatred of the two tribes which adhered to the worship of JEHOVAH, and to the family of David, that the imposition could never have passed. Nor would any thing have tended

* 2 Kings xxiii. 5—10.

† 2 Kings xxiii. 9.

‡ 2 Chr. xxxiv. 33.

|| 2 Chron. xvii. 7—9.

more directly to countenance and support their apostacy, than such a charge against the Jews. But, not to mention that those prophecies, which were addressed to the Israelites after their apostacy, contain a vast variety of references to the written law of Moses, it is an unquestionable fact, that these very books of the Pentateuch, which are still found in the Samaritan language, were in the hands of the ten tribes at the time of their revolt.

Some have insinuated, that these books were most probably forged in the reign of David or of Solomon. This could not be the case during the reign of the latter. It is utterly incredible, that a prince, who for a considerable time, and in so many respects, apostatized from the service of God, should attempt to impose on others a fictitious law, which, as he did not himself comply with it, could only serve to condemn his own conduct. Although he had wished to do so, he must have failed in the attempt. Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, would have urged the forgery as an argument for his rebellion against Solomon,* or, at any rate, as an apology for his establishment of false worship in Israel. But it is worthy of observation, that the very circumstances attending Jeroboam's apostacy from the worship of God, contain a strong confirmation of the truth of the history contained in the Pentateuch. "Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: if this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah." Does he therefore resolve to impeach the memory of Solomon, or of David, or of any of the judges, with the impious crime of imposing, by means of spurious books, a religion that had no authority from God? This certainly would have been the plan so artful a prince would have pursued, had there been any prospect of success. But he knew, that this was too gross to be credited even by the revolted tribes. Therefore, he utters not a single word against the law of Moses. He does not even refuse that Jerusalem was the place chosen by God. He argues merely from conveniency: and employs means to attract the senses of a carnal people. "The king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan."† Here we have an acknowledgment, from an adversary of the Jewish religion, of the truth of Israel's deliverance from Egypt by a divine hand! He addresses the people as one fully convinced, not only that they believed the miraculous works of God in behalf of their fathers, but that what they believed was incontestably true. He does not attempt to detach them entirely from the worship of JEHOVAH, but only wishes them to worship him by the use of

* 1 Kings xi. 26.

† 1 Kings xii. 26.—29.

images. He makes no direct attack on the authority of Moses. He only imitates the temporary apostacy of Aaron. He erects that very emblem which Aaron framed in the wilderness, and thus confirms the scriptural account of that transaction. So far was he from doubting the history of that apostacy, that he seems to have supposed, that the Israelites had still a hankering after the abominations of Egypt, and that they would most readily be entangled in their own ancient snare. He repeats the very words ascribed to Aaron, after he had fashioned the golden calf; he repeats them as exactly as if he had meant to give a verbal quotation from the sacred records of their history: "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."*

David could not have forged these books. Had there been any ground of suspicion that this was the case, it would have been so distinctly remembered in the days of Jeroboam, that it could not have escaped his notice. But indeed the reign of David was too unsettled, and he had too many enemies, for any such attempt. There would surely have been some Saul, some Shimei, or some Absalom, to have discovered and proclaimed the imposture. It will not, I suppose, be disputed, that in the days of David there were many Psalms and songs used in the worship of God; or that these were committed to persons peculiarly set apart for and presiding over this part of divine service, and for preserving these for the use of the Church in succeeding times. As, during this reign, Asaph was set over the singers, we are informed that he also wrote some of the Psalms. This was not only admitted as a well-known fact after the captivity; but is also mentioned as such in the history of Hezekiah.† Now, not to refer to a number of other historical psalms, which may be as ancient, if not more so, although they have no particular inscription; in the seventy-eighth psalm, one of those which bears the name of Asaph, we have an enumeration of the principal miracles recorded in the Mosaic history; which plainly shews that these were firmly believed by all the Israelites, as early as the reign of David. They would not otherwise have harmoniously agreed to celebrate these events in the most solemn acts of their worship.

Saul, the favourite of infidels, because the enemy of David, not to say, because rejected by the God of Israel, will not be suspected of this crime. He had never sufficient influence in his kingdom for carrying on such a deceit. Besides, he was rejected because of his conduct with respect to the Amalekites. Samuel, in the instructions given to the king, had, in the name of *JEHOVAH*, referred to the history of Amalek, as recorded in the books of Moses;‡ and when Saul returned from the war, the prophet declared to him, in the presence of his army, that God

* Exod. xxxii. 4. 8.

† Neh. xii. 46.; 2 Chr. xxix. 30.

‡ 1 Sam. xv. 2. comp. with Ex. xvii. 8. 14.; Deut xxv. 17.—19.

had rejected him on account of his disobedience in this matter. Had there been any suspicion that Samuel had forged the history ascribed to Moses, or that it had been forged by any other, Saul had his answer at hand. He had only to tell the prophet, that the whole was imposture ; and in this he would surely have been supported by the people, who had been accessory to his guilt, and who, according to his account, had been his instigators. But, instead of making any reflection on the law, he humbly confessed his offence. He said to Samuel, " I have sinned ; for I have " transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words ; " because I feared *the people*, and obeyed their voice."*

During the regency of the former judges, there was too much distraction in Israel for the execution of any such scheme of deceit. During this period also, the people of Israel were still far more ready to depart from the worship of JEHOVAH than to bind themselves to it by new ties. They were still apostatizing, and thus subjecting themselves to the yoke of their enemies : and can it be supposed, that, in these circumstances, they would have received supposititious books, every page of which condemned their conduct, and denounced against them that very vengeance which they felt ? During this period, had any books been fabricated, containing relations of events said to have taken place with respect to that very people, to whom these relations were committed, although totally destitute of truth, or highly exaggerated, their falsity must have been well known in the days of David, and even of Solomon. Jesse, the father of David, was only the great-grandson of Salmon, one of those who, according to the records of the nation, witnessed the wonders done in the wilderness, at Jordan, and in Canaan. For he married Rahab, who was saved in the destruction of Jericho.† An individual may be influenced by ignorance, weakness or credulity, to believe concerning his great-grandfather what never took place. But that a whole nation should be brought to believe, not a single fact of an extraordinary kind, but a series of such facts, said to have happened only four generations before, if the whole were a fiction, is itself a supposition far transcending the bounds of credibility.

No imposture with regard to alleged facts could be carried on in the wilderness. The Israelites in general could never have been brought to believe the plagues of Egypt, the miraculous passage through the Red Sea, the proclamation of the law by the voice of God from a mountain all in flames, if these things had not really taken place. For the writer still appeals to themselves as witnesses. He reminds them of what their eyes had seen, and their ears had heard. Had Moses attempted any imposture, it must necessarily have failed. He had many opponents, who attacked his character and conduct in a great variety of instances ; and surely they would never have drawn a veil

* 1 Sam. xv. 24. † Matth. i. 5.

over this, which would have furnished them with so just an apology for opposition. They who said, that he had brought them into the wilderness to kill them with hunger, that he took too much upon him, that he killed the people of the Lord, would certainly on some occasion have twitted him with his imposture.

Add to all these considerations, that the Jews were less subject to such an imposition than any nation we are acquainted with. Perverseness, incredulity and obstinacy, are prominent features in their national character. For nearly eighteen hundred years, they have almost universally resisted such evidence of the truth of a religion built on their own, as has appeared sufficient to many other nations, and even to the most acute and learned among them. Although, from the influence of deep-rooted prejudices concerning a temporal kingdom of the Messiah, they have still resisted the evidence of Christianity; although their faith in the Old Testament has scarcely any influence on their practice; yet so fully are they convinced of the truth of the facts by which it is attested, that there is scarcely an instance of a Jew disbelieving the revelation given to his ancestors. Even Spinoza, although deeply drenched in atheism, did not pretend to deny the truth of the facts recorded in the Jewish scriptures. He only denied the miraculous nature of such as were generally accounted miracles; affirming, that they were all owing to natural causes, and that they had the appearance of what men call miracles, merely because we are not acquainted with the secret causes by which they were produced.

Notwithstanding all the influence, which the pride of a peculiar intercourse with God may be supposed to have had on the Israelites, it appears from their history, that they have been by no means prone to credit the claims made by any individuals among them to divine revelation; if the matter of this pretended revelation was not perfectly consonant to their own corrupt prejudices or inclinations. They were ready enough, in various instances, to acknowledge false prophets; because they "prophesied smooth things." But they almost invariably persecuted, or at least disbelieved, the true; because they reproved their sins, and threatened divine judgments. Now, the books of Moses, for the most part, consist of burdensome precepts, of severe restraints on the natural inclinations of men, of threatenings which must have been exceedingly ungrateful to a carnal people, and of histories extremely humiliating to their pride. From these very books it is undeniable, that nothing but the fullest conviction of the divine mission of Moses, and its continued attestation by the most signal judgments on themselves, retained them in subjection to his authority. It also merits observation, that the Jews in every age have manifested the strongest reluctance to admit any book into their canon, concerning the authority of which there could be any reasonable doubt. Hence they have still refused to acknowledge as canonical, or as divinely inspired, the books

called *apocryphal* ; although some of these, particularly the two books of the Maccabees, bring no inconsiderable accession of honour to their nation, as they contain an account of some of the most illustrious actions recorded in history.

From these observations, the following reflection naturally arises ; that God hath remarkably displayed his infinite wisdom, in making even the unworthiness of church-members to contribute in no inconsiderable degree to the evidence of revelation. In illustrating the proofs of Christianity, it hath been often observed, that the apostacy of Judas, in all its circumstances, so far from being an argument against our religion, affords a very strong presumption in its favour. For had this man perceived any vestiges of imposture in Christ, or in any of his disciples, it is inconceivable, that he should not have vindicated his own conduct by revealing them. In like manner, we may reason in favour of the Jewish revelation, from the rebellious conduct of the Israelites. Had they, in their successive generations, strictly adhered to the law of Moses, and revered its supporters, there would have been far more ground to suspect a combination to deceive. But we may clearly perceive, that He, who makes " the wrath of man " to praise " him, permitted their frequent rebellions in the wilderness, their reiterated apostacies afterwards, and even the permanent revolt of the greatest part of the nation from the true religion, to afford us the most satisfying proof, that they had nothing to object to its evidence. Had they, in any period, made an objection of this kind, it is incredible that there should have been no traces of it in that volume, which so faithfully records, not merely the opposition of enemies, but the misconduct of its best friends.

III. There were many memorials of the miracles said to have been wrought in the sight of the Israelites, in the more early period of their national existence, by which the truth of these miracles was attested to this people in their succeeding generations and by which it is rendered indisputable to us.

Not only were twelve stones taken out of the midst of Jordan, and erected in Gilgal ; but the same number of stones were set up in the midst of Jordan, as a memorial of its " waters being cut " off.* The stones taken out of Jordan were such that a man might carry one of them on his shoulder. But the same is not said of those set up in the midst of the river. Hence it is probable, that they were much larger, and so high that they might be distinctly seen when the water was low.* Had the stones, which appeared in the midst of Jordan, been set up in any later age, the fraud must easily have been detected. Had the question been asked, What is meant by these stones ? it would not have been a satisfactory answer to any reasonable person, that they were

* Josh. iv. 1—9

erected by Joshua at the time that their ancestors passed through Jordan. He would instantly have replied, I have lived so many years in the vicinity of this river, and have never seen them before, even when the water was as low as it is now ; nay, I have never found any person who either saw or heard of them till of late.

The writer of the book of Joshua ascribes the downfall of the walls of Jericho to a miracle. In consequence of the Israelites having compassed the city seven days, and seven times on the seventh day, while the priests blew with trumpets of rams horns, (or, as it may be read, jubilee-trumpets), and “the people shouted with a great shout, the walls fell down flat, so that the people “went up into the city, every man straight before him.”* The circumstances are so singular, that it cannot easily be conceived they should have gained credit with a whole nation in succeeding ages, had they not really taken place ; especially as they added nothing to the military fame of the Israelites, but to the carnal eye rather represented them in a contemptible light.

There were, however, two remarkable facts, by which the truth of this miracle was attested in later times. The family of Rahab the harlot was well known, as long as the distinction of families was preserved among that people. “Joshua,” it is said, “saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father’s household, and “all that she had ; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this “day.”† If this account was written while Rahab herself was living, it proves the very great antiquity of the book of Joshua : for in this case the writer appealed to an impartial witness, who was yet alive. If, on the other hand, the phrase, *even unto this day*, be understood, as infidels explain it in other places, of a period remote from the event ; and if the preceding language respect Rahab, not personally, but in her posterity and kindred ; it follows, that the circumstances connected with her deliverance were well known to the Israelites many ages after they are said to have happened. It cannot be supposed, indeed, that kings would have reckoned it no disgrace that this woman’s name should be retained in their genealogy, had they not been convinced, that God had signally honoured her by giving her so great a salvation.

The other fact I refer to, is that recorded 1 Kings xvi. 34. concerning the judgments inflicted on the man who rebuilt Jericho. Had not the whole nation been bound by a solemn adjuration ; ‡ had not the memory of this been distinctly preserved ; it is incredible that Jericho should never have been rebuilt till the time of Ahab, especially as its situation was peculiarly pleasant.§|| There can be no good reason to doubt the account given

* Josh. vi. 20.

† Josh. vi. 25.

‡ Josh. vi. 26.

§ 2 Kings ii. 19. 2 Chr. xxviii. 15.

|| There was a place called Jericho in the reign of David, as appears from 2 Sam. x. 5. But it seems to have been only an obscure village, which received this name from its vicinity to the ruins of the ancient city.

of the completion of the curse, pronounced by Joshua, on the sons of Hiel the Bethelite. Had not this fact been well known, when the first book of Kings was written; had it not been equally well known, that Jericho had laid in ruins for more than five centuries, and that no one would venture to rebuild it, lest the curse should fall upon him; that book would have been rejected, as containing the most ridiculous falsehoods, which it was in the power of every one to contradict.

They had a standing monument of the miraculous destruction of Korah and his company, in the preservation of the two hundred and fifty censers employed by these wicked men in offering incense. They were converted into broad plates for covering the altar of burnt-offering. As this was commanded for "a sign," and "a memorial unto the children of Israel,"* it is most likely, that they were not beaten into one mass but preserved distinct, forming as many plates as there had been censers; so that no worshipper could fix his eye on that altar which stood without the tabernacle, without remembering the miracle wrought for the vindication of the divine authroity. This is the more probable, as these censers formed a second covering of brass for the altar.†

We are informed, however, that "the children of Korah died "not"‡ in this destruction. Either they were not engaged in their father's rebellion, or they repented at the warning of Moses. They are frequently mentioned afterwards. Some of them were appointed by David to be singers, and others to be porters in the house of the LORD.§ Samuel the prophet was one of the descendants of Korah.|| Heman and Asaph also acknowledged him as their ancestor.¶ Now, as these two persons were "set "over the service of song in the house of the LORD," and ministered first in the tabernacle, and afterwards in the temple; as many of the psalms are expressly inscribed, "To the sons of Korah;" it is quite incredible, that they would have admitted into the public worship of God the hundred and sixth psalm, which particularly refers to that rebellion that proved fatal to their ancestors, had they not been fully persuaded, not only of the truth of the rebellion, but of the truth of the miracles there narrated.** They would not otherwise have actively contributed to the preservation of so deep a stigma on their name.

The pot of manna preserved uncorrupted,†† and the rod of Aaron still bearing blossoms and fruit,‡‡ both of which were laid up beside the ark, were also meant for standing memorials. These must have been visible, not only to the high-priest, when he entered into the most holy place, but to the inferior priest and

* Numb. xvi. 36—40. † Exod. xxvii. 1, 2. ‡ Numb. xxvi. 11.

§ 1 Chr. xxvi. 1. || 1 Chr. vi. 33, 37. comp. with 1 Sam. i. 1, 20.

¶ 1 Chr. vi. 31, 33,—37, 39.

** Psalm cvi. 16—18.

†† Ezed. xvi. 33.

‡‡ Numb. xvii. 10.

Levites, nay, to all the congregation on particular occasions, as long as the tabernacle was in an ambulatory state, that is, till the days of David, or even till the consecration of the temple.

The perpetual abode of the Shechinah or cloud of glory on the mercy-seat, and the answers given by Urim and Thummim, were also standing memorials of the truth of the revelation given to the Israelites, as well as permanent attestations of all the miracles formerly wrought in confirmation of it. I shall not insist on these, however, as it may be pretended that they were proofs of a more secret nature. But it is worthy of observation, that although all the Jews agree in affirming the continuance of the cloud of glory, and of the responses by Urim and Thummim, as well as the preservation of the two tables of the law, of the pot of manna, and of Aaron's rod blossoming, till the time of the destruction of the first temple, not one of them ever insinuated, that these things were known under the second. They also acknowledge, that they had not the fire from heaven. This is certainly a strong presumption in favour of the credibility of their national testimony, in regard to the existence of these miracles in the preceding period. For, if blind credulity, or zeal for the honour of their nation, prompted them to feign such stories, why were these principles wholly confined in their operation to the period preceding the captivity? The renouncing of every claim to such astonishing displays of the divine presence, might well seem to reflect disgrace on the nation, after its return from Babylon, great in proportion to the honour ascribed to it in former ages. The dishonour, arising from this fatal deprivation, would thus preponderate against the glory. Let it not be said, that from their greater intercourse with other nations after the captivity, any imposture would have been more easily detected. For such was their intercourse with all the neighbouring nations in the days of Solomon, that they would have found more difficulty in any course of imposture then, than during several ages after their return from Babylon. The Jews, indeed, do not resemble the Papists, who lay claim to an uninterrupted succession of miracles. While they firmly believe the truth of those wrought in former times, they pretend to nothing of this nature now. They do not even pretend that there was any constant succession of miracles in the earliest periods of their history. Thus, in one of their most ancient writings, we find a firm believer in former miracles, expressing his astonishment that there was no such display of divine power in his own time. Gideon said, "If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, Saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? but now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Mid-ianites."*

* Judg. vi. 13.

We have indeed an account of a miraculous display of the divine presence in the days of Solomon, which confirms all the miracles recorded with respect to this nation in former times. This was done in the eyes of all Israel, on a very remarkable occasion, at the time of the consecration of the temple. "When Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD's house. And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground, upon the pavement, and worshipped."* No doubt could remain with any one who witnessed this, of the truth of what he had heard or read concerning the pillar of fire conducting and protecting his fathers, and shooting forth destruction on their enemies. For he saw this very symbol which had been so much celebrated in the history of Israel. Had not this been an indisputable fact, it would never have been published as a thing done in the eyes of all the congregation of Israel. Had there been any reason to doubt of it, Jeroboam, the enemy of Solomon, would have found it an excellent handle, when he sought to turn away the Israelites from the true religion. And what time soever the second book of Chronicles was wrote, there were then extant three other books, which had been composed by contemporary writers, narrating all the great events of Solomon's reign. These were "the book of Nathan the prophet; the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite; and the visions of Iddo the seer, against Jeroboam the son of Nebat."† The writer of the first book of kings, who also mentions the appearance of the cloud of glory on this occasion,‡ refers to another work, entitled, "The Acts of Solomon."§ Now, had not this been a real miracle, the writer of the history would never have dared to refer to the well-known accounts of those who lived at the time when it is said to have been wrought. It may be added, that the great miracle ascribed to the instrumentality of the prophet Elijah, about an hundred years afterwards, was a striking confirmation of the truth of the history given of this. For the fire in like manner descended from heaven and consumed the sacrifice. The circumstances of this event are such, that it never would have gained credit, if it had not really taken place. For it is asserted, that all Israel were gathered together, and that in consequence of the miracle, all the prophets of Baal, to the number of four hundred and fifty, were slain by Elijah.|| These circumstances are of so public a nature, that, had they been false, they must necessarily have been contradicted. I do not urge these miracles, however, as permanent memorials. They were only occa-

* 2 Chr. vii. 1—3. † 2 Chr. ix. 29.

‡ 1 Kings viii. 10, 11.

§ Chap. xi. 41.

|| 1 Kings xviii. 19—40.

sional, but of such a nature as to afford a successive confirmation of the truth of the history of former miracles.

The Gibeonites were undoubtedly preserved in Israel, as hereditary witnesses of the great things which God had done for his people. They were Amorites, and therefore among the nations devoted to destruction. But, as we learn from the book of Joshua, they sent messengers to him and to the princes of Israel, who pretended they had come from a remote country; and thus by their craft they obtained a league of amity. The Gibeonites acted this part, because they had heard what Joshua had done to Jericho, and also what the Lord "did in Egypt, and all that he "did to the two kings of the Amorites."* When Joshua said to them, "Wherefore have ye beguiled us?" they gave this memorable answer: "Because it was certainly told thy servants, "how that the Lord thy God commanded his servant Moses to "give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land "from before you; therefore we were sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing." We are also informed, that the congregation were displeased at the conduct of the princes in this instance, most probably because they considered it as a transgression of the commandment of God. But the princes told the congregation, that they "might not touch" the Gibeonites, because they had "sworn unto them by the Lord "God of Israel." They, however, determined to treat them as bondmen. Therefore, "Joshua made them," or "*delivered* "them *over* that day, to be hewers of wood and drawers of water "for the congregation, and for the altar of the Lord."† Hence they were called *Nethinims*, that is, *given* or *delivered over*. Now, if it appear that this nation was actually preserved in the land of Canaan, and lived in a state of friendship with the Israelites, long after the other nations were exterminated; this circumstance must remarkably confirm the truth of the history given of the wonders done by Moses and Joshua, on account of which the Gibeonites are said to have sought the friendship of Israel.

We find, that this people continued to live among the Israelites in the time of David. Saul, indeed, had attempted to exterminate them, although we know not exactly from what motive. This crime was punished by a famine of three years duration in the days of David. From the history given of this event, it appears, that they had not been wholly destroyed. For it is said, that David "called the Gibeonites,"‡ in consequence of the answer he had received from the oracle of JEHOVAH. They are afterwards distinguished in the sacred history by the name of *Nethinims*; which name, as we have seen, expressed the work to which they were devoted. David and the princes confirmed the ancient ordinance, by particularly "appointing them for the ser-

* Josh. ix. 3, 9, 10. † Ver. 19—21, 27. ‡ 2 Sam. xxi. 1, 2.

"vice of the Levites."* Under the name of *Nethinims*, they are frequently mentioned among those who returned from the captivity.† They are classed with the other Canaanites, called "the children of Solomon's servants,"‡ because they were the posterity of those who remained of the original inhabitants of the land, whom that king reduced to the state of bondmen.§

Infidels have argued strenuously against the truth of revelation, from the account given of the divine command to exterminate the nations of Canaan, because of their wickedness; and from the pretended cruelty of the Israelites in doing so. For it is worthy of remark, that, however incredulous in other respects, they eagerly grasp at the evidence of Scripture, whenever they think they can turn it against itself. A vindication of this awful injunction belongs not to the present argument. But it is an unquestionable fact, that the Gibeonites, although known to be Canaanites, were preserved alive, nay, permitted to do the servile work of the temple, during the continuance of the Jewish state. Reasoning, then, on the ground of that cruelty which infidels ascribe to the Jews, it surpasses all belief, that they would have spared one whole nation which they had in their power, and thus have acted so contrary to their avowed principles and conduct with respect to the other nations of Canaan; had not the account given of the league between Joshua and the Gibeonites, and of the reasons of it, been to their conviction indisputably true. The severe punishment inflicted on the posterity of Saul, on account of the slaughter of the Gibeonites, which infidels seem willing to admit, that they may asperse the character of David, must have excited the Israelites to inquire if any such league really was made, and for what reasons; if the least doubt remained in the minds of any on this head.

It pleased God to choose another Gentile race to be standing witnesses of the wonders which he wrought in redeeming his people from Egypt, and bringing them into Canaan. I mean the race of the *Kenites*. They were the posterity of Reuel or Raguel, also called Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, who was "priest of Midian." The same word also signifies *prince*, and is frequently used in both senses. It would seem that he was a descendant of Midian, one of the sons of Abraham, by Keturah.|| But by this time the Midianites were greatly corrupted, in consequence of their connection with the Moabites.¶ Some think, that this corruption extended to those only who lived in the neighbourhood of Moab. It is evident, however, from Zipporah's great reluctance to circumcision, that her family disregarded this seal of the covenant made with Abraham.** When Moses asked leave from Jethro to return to Egypt, he did not once hint the as-

* Ezra viii. 20. † Ezra ii. 43, 58.; vii. 7, 24.; Neh. iii. 26.; x. 28. &c. ‡ Ezra ii. 55, 58; Neh. vii. 57—60.; xi. 3. § 1 Kings ix. 20—22. || Gen. xxv. 2. ¶ Num. xxv. 17, 18. ** Exod. iv. 26.; xviii. 2.

tonishing vision he had had, nor the commission given him ; but simply expressed his wish to see if his brethren were “ yet alive.”* From the language which Jethro used in reply to Moses, after he had informed him of the mighty works of JEHOVAH, it would seem that he did not formerly acknowledge him as the true God. He indeed ascribed the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt to JEHOVAH ; and declared his full conviction, in consequence of the astonishing display of divine power in the destruction of their enemies, that JEHOVAH was supreme. For he said, “ Blessed be the LORD, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians.” But he speaks as if this conviction were a new thing : “ Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods ; for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly, he was above them.”† Some time afterward, Hobab, his son, visited Moses in the wilderness.‡ Moses urged him to join his lot with the Israelites.§ Hobab did not at this time comply with the request of Moses ; but it is at least highly probable that he did so afterwards. For shortly after the death of Joshua, and while Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, was yet alive, “ the children of the Kenite, Moses’ father-in-law,” are mentioned as “ dwelling among the people,” and one body of them at least as especially connecting themselves “ with the children of Judah ;”|| while another branch of the same race dwelt in the inheritance allotted to the tribe of Manasseh.¶ God undoubtedly overruled the preference which they gave to this tribe, for preserving them, long after this period, in their adherence to the true religion, and for retaining them as special witnesses to its truth, when the ten tribes apostatized.

Surely, the Kenites had no temporal inducement to leave their own country : “ Strong was their dwelling-place, and they put their nest in a rock.”** The family of Jethro enjoyed the principality, or the priesthood ; both, perhaps, in the land of Midian. What then could induce them to become strangers in another country, but an earnest desire to “ trust under the wings of the “ LORD God of Israel,” from a full conviction of his almighty power ? It is unnatural to suppose, that on any other account they should forsake the religious rites of their ancestors, and embrace those of another nation. They were by no means a people given to change. For we find them rigidly adhering to the

* Exod. iv. 18.

† Exod. xviii. 10, 11.

‡ It has been generally supposed, that Jethro was also called Hobab. For supporting this idea, Reuel has been considered, not as the father of Zipporah, the wife of Moses, but as her grandfather. However, as Zipporah is called the daughter of Reuel or Raguel *a*, and as Hobab is called his son, it is certainly more natural to suppose, that Jethro, who must at any rate have had two names, was the same with Raguel, than that Jethro and Hobab were the same.

§ Num. x. 29—32. ¶ Judg. i. 16. ¶ Judg. iv. 11. ** Num. xxiv. 21.

a Exod. ii. 18.

simplicity of their ancient manners in the midst of the Israelites, and strictly observing the injunctions of one of their ancestors, even as to matters of indifference, in a time of general apostacy and depravity among that people by whom they were surrounded. Not only did they live in tents, while Deborah judged Israel,* but so late as the days of Jehoiakim, immediately before the captivity.† That the Rechabites were not descended from Jacob, is evident from their speaking of themselves as *strangers*.‡ That they were the posterity of the Kenites is elsewhere expressly declared. “The families of the scribes which dwelt at Jabez; the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, and the Suchathites. These are the Kenites that came of Hemath, the father of the house of Rechab.” According to another reading, the office, the character, and the manners of this people, are at once pointed out. “The race of the scribes that dwelt at Jabez, called porters, obedient, and dwelling in tents, are the Kenites,” &c.§ It is generally admitted, that the two books of Chronicles were written after the Babylonish captivity. Hence it appears, that they were acknowledged as the posterity of Jethro, from the time of Moses till that of Ezra. Saul, although he brake the league with the Gibeonites, spared the Kenites, the kindred of Jethro, who had not joined themselves to Israel or who might have retired into the country of Amalek for a time, during the oppressions of the Philistines. He said to them, “Go, depart, get ye down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them: for ye shewed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt.”|| Thus Saul appears as a witness of the truth of the history contained in the books of Moses, as far as it concerned this people.

Many of the *ordinances* enjoined on the Israelites were standing testimonies of the truth of their religion. As God commanded, that all the males should go up to Jerusalem thrice a-year, to observe the three principal feasts, it might seem, that thus the country would be exposed to invasion from surrounding enemies. But he gave his people a promise, which might serve them as a peculiar test of the truth of their religion, while they continued to observe its solemn rites. He assured them, that “no man should desire their land when they went up to appear before the LORD, thrice in the year.”¶ An impostor would never have rested the truth of his false system of religion on so improbable a ground. As the Israelites were so frequently attacked by the heathen nations around, had their religion been false, this must soon have appeared by the failure of this promise: and it is not easily conceivable, that a people so prone to murmuring and apostacy, should not some time or other have availed themselves of this circumstance as an apology for their conduct.

Among the ordinances enjoined on Israel, that of the *sabbat*-

* Judges iv. 11. † Jer. xxxv. 1—10. ‡ Jer. xxxv. 7. § 1 Chr. ii. 55.
|| 1 Sam. xv. 6. ¶ Exod. xxxiv. 24.

ical year deserves particular attention. The weekly sabbath had been instituted, to remind man that he was God's. He also appointed a septennial sabbath, to teach the Israelites, that even the land which they possessed was not their own, but his. According to their law, the strict observation of this was to be attended with a miracle. On the year preceding the sabbatical, the land was to produce as much as would abundantly support them till the third year after. For, the LORD commanded Moses to say to the Israelites : " When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a Sabbath unto the LORD. Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof. But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD : thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard."—" And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase : Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years. And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit, until the ninth year ; until her fruits come in, ye shall eat of the old store."*

Had this extraordinary increase immediately succeeded the fallow year, it might have been accounted for, according to the course of nature. But when the land had been exhausted by being constantly laboured for five preceding years, its produce on the sixth, so far from being greater, ought, according to the course of nature, to have been less than on any of the preceding years. This miracle was virtually a continuation of that with respect to the manna, according to the different circumstances of the people. No man who witnessed it, could doubt the truth of those records, by which he was informed, that his ancestors were fed by manna from heaven ; and particularly, that because " the LORD had given them the sabbath, on the sixth day he gave them the bread of two days."†

Thus the Israelites, if they had any doubt of the truth of their religion, could easily put it to the test. If, on their doing so, the promise failed, they would either have renounced their religion as false, or ever after have abstained from obedience to this precept. But they did neither. One of the solemn engagements in the covenant of those who returned from the captivity, was, that they should " leave the seventh year."‡ Had not the people been fully convinced, that this was a divine ordinance, such a proposal, on the part of their leaders, must have appeared extremely unreasonable, especially so soon after the land had lain waste for seventy years. In the time of the Maccabees, this year was " a year of rest to the land."§ Josephus, when giving

* Lev. xxv. 2—4. 20—22.

† Ex. xvi. 22, 29.

‡ Nch. x. 31.

§ 1 Mac. vi. 49. 53.

an account of the siege of the castle of Dagon, near Jericho, in the reign of Antiochus Soter, and the pontificate of Hyrcanus, the son of Simon, says, that the siege was "protracted till the arrival of the sabbatical year, which put a period to the war. "Every seventh year," he adds, "as well as every seventh day, is observed by the Jews as a time of rest."* It is incredible that the Jews, a people so much attached to temporal interest, should have observed this law, had not the promise connected with obedience been fulfilled in their experience.

This law was also sanctioned by a penalty, to be inflicted on the Israelites, in case of disobedience. If they denied themselves that comfortable proof of the truth of their religion, which consisted in the completion of the promise; they were assured, that this should be demonstrated to them by one in relation to this very ordinance, which should fill them with terror. For their law contains this awful threatening: "If ye walk contrary unto me,—I will bring the land into desolation,—and I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths. As long as it lieth desolate, it shall rest: because it did not rest in your sabbaths when ye dwell upon it."†

As it is generally admitted, that the two books of Chronicles were written after the captivity, they are also ascribed to Ezra. The latter part of the second book cannot have an earlier date; and it affords a very strong presumption, that Ezra was the writer, that the book which bears his name begins with the very words with which the second book of Chronicles concludes. The credibility of this writer does not seem to be disputed even by infidels, as far, at least, as he relates events which he might himself be acquainted with. But he, in the plainest manner, accuses his countrymen of disobedience to their God, in having neglected to observe the sabbatical year. When speaking of the continuance of the Jews in Babylon for so long a time, he says, that this was to "fulfil the word of the LORD, by the mouth of "Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate, she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years."‡ Would the writer have dared to exhibit such a charge, had not the fact been indisputable? Would not his contemporaries, and of consequence their successors, have rejected his history, had they known this to be a false accusation, or had they been assured that no such law existed among their ancestors, and that no such custom had been observed by them in any period? Such a calumny, so far from giving force to a new, to a superstitious ordinance, would most certainly have excited the Jews to reject it with indignation.

* Antiq. lib. 13. c. 15.

† Lev. xxvi. 21, 32—35.

‡ 2 Chr. xxxvi. 21.

If the language necessarily implies, that the years of desolation were exactly to correspond to the number of the sabbatical years, which had been formerly omitted ; and that those had been omitted in uninterrupted succession ; we must conclude, that this ordinance had not been observed for four hundred and ninety years before the captivity. This would carry us as far back as the time of Samuel. It has been observed, however, that if “ we date “ the desolation of the land from the murder of Gedaliah, at “ which time those few Jews that were left there, fled into Egypt, “ to the first year of Cyrus ; the number of sabbatic years will be “ just fifty-two, and will carry us back three hundred and sixty “ four years, that is, to about the beginning of Asa’s reign ; from “ which time the people began to be very remiss in this and many other particulars of the Mosaic law.”* The reason given for adopting this mode of calculation, is, that it seems scarcely credible that the sabbatical year should have been neglected during the reign of David and other pious kings.

If it be deemed necessary to interpret the language of Scripture, already quoted, as signifying that the captivity endured till the exact number of sabbatical years due to the land was fulfilled ; I would rather suppose that this ordinance was not totally neglected, either for four hundred and ninety, or for three hundred and sixty-four years ; but that this was the case only during the government of the judges, and the reigns of the wicked kings, or of those who were more deficient in reformation. Hence it would follow, that some of this debt was incurred before the age of Samuel. And surely it is more reasonable to suppose, that this ordinance would be neglected in the frequent apostacies of the preceding period, than that it should be observed then, and totally disregarded during the presidency of Samuel, the reign of David, of Asa, of Josiah, and other kings of a similar character. There seems to be no reason to doubt, that at least one sabbatical year was observed in the reign of Hezekiah. For we learn, both from the second book of Kings, and from the prophecy of Isaiah, that God gave the king of Judah this sign of deliverance from the Assyrians : “ Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same, “ and in the third year sow ye and reap, and plant vineyards, and “ eat the fruit thereof.”† The second year mentioned was undoubtedly the sabbatical year ; for the language here used is that of the law by which it was enjoined.‡

Another ordinance, respecting the sabbatical year, deserves our attention. On this year, during the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel came to appear before God, the law was to be “ read in “ their hearing, that they might learn, and fear the Lord their “ God, and observe to do all the words of this law ; and that their “ children, which had not known any thing, might hear, and learn

* Univ. Hist. vol. x. p. 178, Note.

† 2 Kings xix. 29 ; Isa. xxxvii. 30.

‡ Lev. xxv. 5—7.

“to fear the Lord their God.”* Thus, not to mention the continued instructions of the Levites, who were dispersed through the land for this very purpose; once every seven years, all those who were assembled to observe the feast of tabernacles, had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with that law which was said to have been written by Moses. This was the most proper time that could have been chosen. For during this year the minds of the people must have been less occupied with worldly concerns than during any other. They had neither to sow nor to reap. It was also “the year of release.” Hence the poor, those especially whose services had been adjudged for debt, would find themselves deeply interested in that law, which proclaimed liberty to them; and would not tamely submit to the neglect of this ordinance, as they would probably ascribe it to a design to deprive them of their imprescriptible rights. Had the priests begun to observe this ordinance only in some late period; the people, those at least whose interest was affected, either by the release of their captives, or by the apprehended loss of their harvests, would instantly have said; “How can ye presume to impose on us a law that we have never heard of before? If this was written by Moses, why have we never heard it read in any former period, at the time of this feast; although you acknowledge, by the precept you now publish, that it should have been read every seven years?” Or, supposing that the law had been regularly read every sabbatical year; if any material alteration was at any time introduced, can it be imagined that this would not be perceived by one individual among the many thousands of Israel?

The separation of the tribe of *Levi* affords a striking proof of the truth of the miracles recorded in the Mosaic history. Men in general do not easily part with their privileges, especially if these have the sanction of antiquity. No nation has ever appeared more tenacious of these than the Israelites. It is certain that among them the honour of the priesthood, and service of the sanctuary, was, under pain of death, restricted to one tribe. It cannot be supposed that all the other tribes would have submitted to this, had the preference given to the tribe of *Levi* rested on a false ground. Among other ancient nations, the priesthood was an honourable appendage of the primogeniture. It was considered indeed as one of its chief privileges. Before the separation of the tribe of *Levi*, this was also the case among the Israelites. Matters continued on this footing for some time after they left Egypt. For Moses “sent young men of the children of Israel,” or as the Chaldee renders it, “the first born, which offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord.” This was done on a very important occasion. With the blood of these very sacrifices was the book of the covenant to be consecrated.† Now, what is the reason given for this important change? It is thus expressed by the Supreme Lawgiver: “I, behold I,

* Deut. xxxi. 10—13.

† Exod. xxiv. 5—8.

“ have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel, in-
 “ stead of all the first-born that openeth the matrix among the
 “ children of Israel : Therefore the Levites shall be mine : Be-
 “ cause all the first-born are mine : for on the day that I smote
 “ all the first-born in the land of Egypt, I hallowed unto me all the
 “ first-born in Israel, both man and beast : mine they shall be : I
 “ am the LORD.”* Had not the reason assigned for this separa-
 tion been an incontestable truth. can it be supposed, that, in all
 the murmurings and rebellions of Israel, it should never have been
 denied, or so much as disputed ? In the rebellion of Korah, when
 the insurgents assembled against Moses and Aaron, pleading that
 “ the congregation were holy ;” is it not unaccountable, that if this
 deliverance was a mere pretence, not one of them should have
 thrown out such an insinuation ?† If it be supposed that the Le-
 vites, who wished to participate in the priesthood, would not make
 any such objection, was there the same reason for the silence of
 the sons of Reuben, who were leaders in this rebellion ? As they
 might reckon themselves more injured than others, Reuben being
 the first-born, instead of joining with the Levites, they would
 undoubtedly have ridiculed the reason given for their consecra-
 tion, had there been the least ground to doubt of the fact. But al-
 though they deny the claim of Moses to the principality, and of
 Aaron to the priesthood, they quarrel not with the honour confer-
 red on the Levites. They attempt not to deny the fact given as
 the reason of their separation, though this would have been the
 best argument they could have employed, had there been the least
 ground for it. Thus, it appears to have been the will of God,
 that in all the generations of Israel, every Levite should be a living
 memorial of the miraculous preservation of the first-born.

It is evident indeed, that the law with respect to the *redem-
 tion* of the *first-born* was meant to serve the same end. Accord-
 ing to this law, all the first-born of man and of unclean beasts
 were to be redeemed ; and the first-born of clean beasts were to
 be offered in sacrifice. That the ordinance was meant as a per-
 petual memorial of the miraculous deliverance of the Israelites,
 is evident from the direction given with respect to the informa-
 tion they were to communicate to their children on this head :
 “ It shall be when thy son asketh thee, in time to come, saying,
 “ What is this ? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of
 “ hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, and from the house
 “ of bondage. And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hard-
 “ ly let us go, that the LORD slew all the first-born in the land
 “ of Egypt, both the first-born of man, and the first-born of beast :
 “ therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all that openeth the matrix,
 “ being males ; but all the first-born of my children I redeem.”‡
 Had there not been the fullest conviction of the truth of the de-
 liverance referred to, when this ordinance was first instituted,

* Numb. iii. 12, 13 : see also ver. 40, 41.

† Numb. xvi. 1—5.

‡ Exod. xiii. 11—15.

it cannot be believed that the Israelites would have submitted to it; for two reasons. First, It was a very expensive ordinance. This single law deprived the Israelites of a fifth or sixth part of their property in cattle. It might seem very hard that they should be obliged to break the neck of a beast, which would have been very serviceable to them, but could not be accepted in sacrifice if they did not redeem it by another.* For the redemption of every first-born of man, they had to pay five shekels, amounting to about twelve shillings of our money.† Now, it is inconceivable that a people, so remarkably attached to riches, should have submitted to such a law, had they made the least doubt of the fact assigned as the reason of it. But we know, that to this very day it is observed among them.

This was also a very humiliating ordinance. It represented all the first-born of Israel as in a lower state than that of slaves; as devoted persons, who had no claim to deliverance from the sword of divine justice, but by making a purchase of their lives. It must therefore have been exceedingly ungrateful to men of carnal minds, and especially to those young persons who were singled out from others, as peculiarly indebted to divine clemency for the preservation of life.

The observation of the *Passover*, among the Israelites, affords another incontestable proof of the truth of some of the principal events recorded in their history. This is indeed intimately connected with what has been last mentioned. The passover was observed in commemoration of the destruction of all the first-born of Egypt, both of man and beast, and of the salvation of the Israelites. It also supposed the truth of the other miracles said to have been wrought for their deliverance from captivity in that land. We have different accounts of the institution of this feast; but they all agree in this, that it was instituted on the very night of this signal deliverance.

If it be admitted that the passover was instituted as early as the Scripture-history declares, it must follow, that the account of the destruction of the Egyptian first-born, and of the deliverance of the Israelites, is true. For no good reason can be given, why a whole nation should commemorate a deliverance which they were certainly assured never took place. Far less can it be believed, that they should commemorate it in the wilderness, only one year after it is said to have happened,‡ when they must all have known that there was not the least reason for such a solemnity.

Is it pretended, that the passover must have been first observed in some later period? Then it must follow, either that all the Israelites were imposed on by some artful deceiver; or that they unanimously conspired to frame and to propagate a gross and ri-

* Exod. xiii. 13.

† Numb. xviii. 16.

‡ Numb. ix. 1—5.

diculous falsehood. It is incredible that, in any subsequent period, they should in this respect become the dupes of an impostor. For in what period soever the book of Exodus, which contains the institution of the passover, was made known to the Israelites, they must by it have received information, that the observation of this feast in their nation had been coeval with their departure from Egypt. Now, if this was false, as the law was to be read once every seven years, in the hearing of all Israel, it was in the power of every individual to detect and proclaim so palpable an imposition. They would never be induced to believe, that the first passover had been celebrated in Egypt, when they were assured that it was unknown in Israel till within a few years.

As little can it be supposed that, at any subsequent period, they would universally conspire to frame and to propagate a falsehood. As a nation, they were prone to perverseness and discord. How then should they all agree in this? especially as the passover virtually sealed, in the most solemn manner, that institution, already mentioned, which reduced all their first-born to the state of devoted persons, and subjected them to the expense of giving a price for their redemption, and of sacrificing all the first-born of their cattle.

Besides, supposing such a combination in any later period, the people must also have unanimously agreed to tell the most impious falsehood to their children; although it does not appear that they could have any sufficient temptation to such conduct. They were to say to their children, at the celebration of this feast: "This is done, because of that which the LORD did unto me, when I came forth out of Egypt.—It is the sacrifice of the LORD's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses."*

It cannot be doubted, that parents have often told their children fables with respect to false systems of religion. But they have generally done so, under the persuasion of their being true, and because they trusted to vague and corrupt tradition. But in this case it must be supposed, that the whole nation agreed solemnly to declare to their children, concerning an act of divine worship, what they must have known to be false: and the history of mankind affords not one example of such concord in unprofitable depravity.

We might argue in the same manner from the *feast of Tabernacles*, observed in commemoration of their fathers dwelling in tents in the desert; and from the feast of Pentecost, which referred to the giving of the law from Mount Sinai: but it is unnecessary. The authority of the law indeed, in all its "testimonies, statutes and judgments," rests in a special manner on facts.

* Exod. xii. 27. ; xiii. 8.

God demands the obedience of this people, not simply on the ground of his sovereign authority as JEHOVAH; but more immediately on that of the astonishing proofs he had given of his claim to this character, by his mighty works.* Now, as there is scarcely an age in which the Israelites did not, in some shape or other, forsake the law, whence is it that they never denied this foundation; if it was not from a full conviction of the truth of the facts recorded in their history?

IV. Many of the leading facts recorded in the sacred history, concerning the Israelites, are attested by heathen writers.

The testimony of Justin the historian, who wrote in the second century, merits particular attention, although it differs in a variety of instances from the Mosaic history. Justin only abridged the work of Trogus Pompeius, a Greek writer, which is now lost; having most probably been neglected because of the elegance of the compend.

“The Jews,” says this writer, “had their origin from Damascus, a most noble city of Syria; whence also proceeded the Assyrian kings, the descendants of Queen Semiramis. The city received its name from King Damascus, in honour of whom the Syrians worshipped at the sepulchre of his wife Arath, and thence received her as one of their deities. After Damascus reigned Azelus, then Adores, and Abraham, and Israel. But a happy progeny of ten† sons rendered Israel more illustrious than any of his ancestors. Therefore, he delivered to his sons a people divided into ten kingdoms, calling them all Jews, from the name of Juda, who died after the division; and he commanded, that all the survivors should revere the memory of him, whose portion fell to all. The youngest of these brethren was Joseph. His brethren, fearing his superior genius, having secretly surprised him, sold him to foreign merchants. By them he was carried into Egypt. There, when from the acuteness of his capacity, he acquired a knowledge of magical arts, he soon became a great favourite with the king. For he was not only most skillful in prodigies, but acquired a perfect understanding of dreams. Nothing, indeed, either human or divine, seemed hid from him; so that he even foresaw a sterility of the lands many years before it took place: and all Egypt would have perished by famine, had not the king, at his instigation, published an edict, requiring that grain should be preserved for many years: and such were the proofs of his wisdom, that they did not seem to be answers given from man, but God. His son was Moses, who, besides inheriting his father’s wisdom, was distinguished by his beautiful form. But, as they laboured under a leprous scall, the Egyptians, being warned by

* Deut. vi. 20—25.

† Some copies read *twelve*, having *duodecem* instead of *decem*.

"an oracle, expelled him, together with those who were infected,
 "from the confines of Egypt, lest the plague should extend fur-
 "ther. He therefore, being made the leader of the exiles, clan-
 "destinely carried off the sacred things of the Egyptians ; which
 "the Egyptians seeking to recover by arms, they were forced by
 "tempests to return home. Moses, therefore, wishing to re-
 "gain his native country of Damascus, took possession of Mount
 "Sina ; where, when he had at length arrived, after he and the
 "people with him were worn out with fasting for seven days in
 "the deserts of Arabia, he set apart the seventh day, according to
 "the custom of that nation, called the Sabbath, to be observed as
 "a fast in all succeeding ages, because that day had terminated
 "their famine and their wanderings. As they recollected that
 "they had been banished from Egypt, from the fear of their in-
 "fection spreading to others, that they might not be objects of
 "horror to the people among whom they had now settled, they
 "made a law, that they should have no communication with stran-
 "gers. This, at first adopted from policy, became afterwards an
 "article of their religion. After the death of Moses, his son
 "Aruas was first made priest of the Egyptian rites, and immedi-
 "ately after king. Hence it became an invariable custom
 "among the Jews, that the royalty and the priesthood should be
 "united in one person. This conjunction of civil justice with reli-
 "gion has given an incredible stability to their government."*

Azelus and Adores, the kings of Damascus here mentioned,
 seem to be the same persons with Hazael and Ben-hadad of Scrip-
 ture, the latter being called Adad and Ader by Josephus. If this
 be the case, it is a remarkable anachronism to place them before
 Abraham. Trogus Pompeius is not the only historian who asserts,
 that this patriarch reigned at Damascus. Nicolaus of Damascus,
 a Peripatetic philosopher, and celebrated writer of the Augustan
 age, relates, that Abraham, "after leaving Chaldea with an ar-
 "my, resided for some time at Damascus, and reigned there :
 "but that he afterwards removed to Canaan, now called Judea,
 "where he dwelt with his people, and where his posterity have
 "greatly increased."† This story, if it proves nothing else,
 proves the celebrity of Abraham in the East. It is not unlikely,
 that it had its origin from his victory over the five kings. At
 this time he resided at no great distance from Damascus ; for he
 pursued them to Hobah, in the neighbourhood of that city.‡

In the account given from Trogus, we find a strange mixture of
 truth and falsehood. But the very errors in this narrative render
 it more unexceptionable as a collateral confirmation of the sacred
 history. For thus it appears, that the author did not borrow from
 the Jews, but from heathens.

The Jews might in a certain sense be called Syrians. For Ja-
 cob was the son of a Syrian woman : he sojourned twenty years

* Lib. xxxvi. cap. 2. † Ap. Joseph. Antiq. lib.1. c. 8. ‡ Gen. xiv. 15.

in the country of Syria : and his posterity were instructed to say, when offering their first-fruits, " A Syrian, ready to perish, was " my father."*

That part of the history which exhibits Israel as dividing his kingdom among his sons, may at first view appear entirely fabulous. But it bears strong marks of a traditionary allusion to his prophetic division of the land of Canaan on his death-bed ; especially as what is related concerning the patriarch's requiring the rest of his sons to " revere the memory of Judah," is almost a commentary on that striking part of his prophecy ; " Judah, thou " art he whom thy brethren shall praise ;—thy father's children " shall bow down before thee."† As the heathen historian relates, that Israel " called all his sons Jews, from the name of Judah," the version of the passage referred to, in the Targum of Jerusalem, is very similar : " Judah, to thee shall all thy children " confess, and by thy name shall all the Jews be called."

The account given of Joseph, although by mistake he is called the youngest of Jacob's sons, is just such as a heathen would give, if he related the facts recorded in Scripture in his own way ; and clearly shows, that the history of Joseph was well known to the neighbouring nations. The mention made by Trogus of the beauty of Moses, illustrates the accuracy of the Scripture-history, even in more minute circumstances.‡ From this account, it also appears that his wisdom was greatly celebrated.

No one who reads this history, can doubt the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. A false reason is indeed assigned for their departure. But the falsity of the reasons given for remote events, forms no sufficient objection to the truth of these events themselves : for it is obvious, that it is far more easy for tradition to preserve the memory of a remarkable fact, than the causes of it. Let different historians give an account of any great transaction, even in modern times ; although they all agree as to the leading facts, perhaps there will be as many theories, as there are writers, with respect to the springs or causes.

The story of the Israelites being expelled, because of their being infected with leprosy, is contradicted by unquestionable fact. One of their laws excluded every leprous person from the camp. This law could not have been made, but when the people dwelt in a camp, having no fixed habitations. It must, therefore, have been made, before they were in possession of Canaan ; and of consequence, while they were on their way from Egypt to that country. But it is absurd to suppose, that they would have framed such a law, had they been all leprous, or had this disease prevailed to such a degree as to form the reason for their expulsion from Egypt. For if it did not exclude all, it must have excluded the majority : and can it be supposed, that the majority would consent to a law, which excluded themselves ?

* Deut. xxvi. 5.

† Gen. xlix. 8.

‡ Exod. ii. 2.

The fact seems to be this. One of the plagues inflicted on the Egyptians, was that of “ a boil breaking forth with scalding blains ;” * the description of which corresponds greatly with that given of the leprosy. † This is elsewhere called “ the boil of “ Egypt,” and represented as incurable. ‡ We are informed that “ the magicians could not stand before Moses, because of the boil : “ for the boil was *upon the magicians*, and upon all the Egyptians.” || Now, it is most probable, that those here called magicians, and elsewhere *wise-men*, § were the priests of Egypt, who were also her historians. As they could not conceal a fact so well known as that of the departure of the Israelites, they might, from shame, or from revenge, endeavour to throw the odium of this plague, by which they had suffered so severely, upon the Israelites themselves. It confirms this hypothesis, that Manetho, an Egyptian priest and historian, who lived near three hundred years before Christ, during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus. ¶ as cited by Josephus, represents the Jews as banished from Egypt, because they were infected with leprosy. Chæremon, another historian of that nation, refers to the same circumstance. ** This story would in succeeding times be propagated by the Egyptians among the neighbouring nations. But however false the reason assigned for the expulsion of the Israelites, it might in one sense be said with truth that they were expelled. For, according to the sacred historian, “ the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they “ might send them out of the land in haste : for they said, We be “ all dead men.” Hence it is added, that the Israelites “ were “ *thrust out of Egypt*.” †† Thus, in the story of the expulsion of the Israelites “ lest the plague should extend farther,” we may plainly trace the facts, recorded in Scripture, concerning the plague of boils, the terror of the Egyptians lest they should all perish, and their urgency with the Israelites for their departure. The account given by Trogus agrees with that of the Scripture in two circumstances, apparently so opposite, that they would scarcely have been invented by any historian. The Egyptians are represented as *pursuing* the Israelites, after having *expelled* them. In the reason given for the pursuit of the Israelites, that they had “ carried off the sacred things of the Egyptians,” there is an evident allusion to the circumstance of the Israelites spoiling the Egyptians. ‡‡ As the account of Trogus clearly implies, that a number of Egyptians were expelled with the Israelites ; it might be founded on the traditions preserved concerning “ the mixt “ multitude,” which accompanied the Israelites out of Egypt. |||

* Exod. ix. 10. The language of Justin approaches very near to this ; “ *Ægyptii scabrem et vitiliginem paterentur*.” Some copies read *pruriginem*, others, *uliginem*. But they all convey the same idea.

† Lev. xiii. 18—20.

‡ Deut. xxviii. 27.

|| Exod. ix. 11?

§ Exod. vii. 11.

¶ Fabricii Bibl. Græca, vol. ii. c. 20.

** Joseph. cont. Apion, l. i.

†† Exod. xii. 33, 39.

‡‡ Exod. xii. 35, 36.

||| Exod. xii. 38.

The story of the Egyptians being forced by *tempests* to return from the pursuit of the Israelites, is evidently a disguised account of the fate of Pharaoh and his host. As related by the heathen historian, it is self-contradictory. How could a leprous multitude brave those storms, which defeated the army of Egypt? Did their boils make them more able to fly, than the healthy Egyptians were to pursue?

The ridiculous idea of the Israelites travelling for seven days without food, seems to argue a conviction on the part of its authors, that this people had no ordinary means of support in the wilderness. In the heathen accounts, *days* seem to have been substituted for *weeks*: for the law was given from Mount Sinai seven weeks after Israel left Egypt.* This account, however, plainly shews that it was generally believed among the surrounding heathen, that the Israelites received their law at Mount Sinai. I shall only further observe, that, although a false reason is here assigned for the institution of the sabbath, as well as too late an æra; this institution is ascribed to a very early period in the history of Israel.

On the whole, when we consider the remote antiquity of the events narrated; the confusion and frequent absurdity of the accounts given by the most celebrated heathen writers, concerning the more early periods of their own history; the little intercourse they had with the Jews; and their great prejudices against them; so far from wondering that this account varies in many circumstances from that given in the Jewish records, we have much more reason to wonder that there is so remarkable a coincidence.

Apion, an Egyptian writer, although a bitter enemy of the Jews, ascribes great antiquity to their nation. He says, that "in the reign of Amosis, king of Egypt, they departed from that country under Moses as their leader." This Amosis he makes contemporary with Inachus the founder of the Argive kingdom in Greece. According to Clemens Alexandrinus, Inachus lived four hundred years before the Trojan war.† Later chronologers make his reign much earlier. It is evident from this, however, that even the Egyptian writers admit, that the Israelites left Egypt in a very early period.

Many learned writers have supposed, that the Israelites were the *Hycsos* or shepherd-kings, who, according to Manetho, held all Lower Egypt in subjection for 259 years. Others, because there is so little agreement between the Scripture-history and the circumstances mentioned by Manetho, suppose that these shepherds were some other people. But not to say that the number of years assigned to their usurpation agrees very nearly with the period which elapsed from the advancement of Joseph to

* Exod. xix. 1. Lev. xxiii. 15, 16.

† Strom. lib. i. p. 235.

the departure of the Israelites ; it seems to settle the dispute, that Manetho himself asserts, that a great body of these shepherds, during the reign of Themosis, "retreated to a country now known by the name of Judea, where they built the city of Jerusalem." He also says, that during the reign of Amosis, whom he places long after Themosis, the remnant of these shepherds "united under Osarsiph, a priest of Heliopolis, whose commands they swore to obey, on condition of not being obliged to worship the Egyptian gods ; that they should marry with their own people, and eat such meats as they deemed holy. Osarsiph," he adds, "was the founder of that polity : he was so named from Osiris, a god worshipped at Heliopolis.—" When he changed his religion he took the name of Moses."* However much the truth is disguised in this account, it seems unnatural to understand it of any other nation than the Israelites. As Joseph, who was next in dignity to the king, "bought all the land for Pharaoh," and removed the people "to cities from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end thereof ;"† it was natural enough in succeeding ages to ascribe such changes to conquest by a strange people who led the life of shepherds, a life extremely odious to the Egyptians. Manetho evidently refers to the character of Moses as a legislator ; and it is difficult to conceive how he should have connected Moses with these shepherds, had he not found such a connexion already established in the ancient annals, or at least in the ancient traditions of Egypt. Besides, Themosis is generally viewed as the same with Amosis, in whose reign, according to Apion, the Israelites left Egypt. As Moses "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," there is every reason to suppose, that he had been educated by their priests ; and as he did not "visit his brethren" till he was "full forty years old,"‡ we need not wonder that in succeeding times he was not only considered as a priest, but called an apostate, in consequence of his joining himself to the Israelites. We learn from Tatian the Assyrian, that in his time the annals of the Egyptians were extant, most diligently compiled by Ptolemy, a priest of Mendes in Egypt. According to Ptolemy, "in the reign of Amosis, the Jews departed from Egypt into their own country, under Moses as their leader." He also represents Amosis as contemporary with Inachus.§

Tacitus, the Roman historian, gives a very particular account of the Jews. "It is related," he says, "that the Jews, being exiles from the island of Crete, took possession of the most remote parts of Lybia, at the time that Saturn was violently expelled by Jupiter from his kingdom. An argument is borrowed from their name. It is said that Ida, being a famous

* Josesh. cont. Ap. lib. i.

† Gen. xlvii. 20, 21.

‡ Acts vii. 22, 23.

§ Tatian. cont. Græc. p. 171. edit. Paris. an. 1615. Vid. etiam, Theophil. ad Autolyc. lib. iii. p. 130, 131.

“ mountain in Crete, the inhabitants, thence called *Idæi*, were, by a barbaric change of the name, denominated *Judæi*. According to some, during the reign of Isis, a great multitude inundating Egypt under Hierosolymus and Juda as their leaders, settled on the nearest lands.” Having mentioned other accounts, he adds, “ The most of authors agree, that a bodily contagion making its appearance in Egypt, when King Occhoris inquired concerning the means of cure, he was commanded by the oracle of Hammon to purge the kingdom, by expelling such men as were detestable to the gods. A great rabble being collected,—they were warned by Moses, one of the exiles, that they could expect no help either from gods or men, as they were deserted by both ; but, that they might be delivered from their present miseries, by implicitly confiding in him as a heavenly leader. To this they assented, and blindly set out on a journey by chance. Nothing distressed them so much as the want of water. And now, not far from destruction, they all lay flat on the ground ; when a flock of wild asses, leaving their pasture, climbed a rock shaded with wood. Moses, forming a conjecture from the verdure of the soil, followed them, and discovered abundant springs of water. Having obtained this refreshment, and continued their journey for six days, on the seventh they took possession of lands, in which they built a city and temple, having expelled the former inhabitants. Moses, in order to secure the nation to himself in succeeding times, instituted new rites, which were contrary to those of other nations.” He afterwards assigns the same reason with Trogius for the consecration of the seventh day of the week, observing, that “ they devoted the seventh year also to idleness. Others,” he says, “ apprehend that this honour belongs to Saturn, and that we have either received the first principles of religion, as handed down by the *Idæans* (or Jews,) who were expelled with Saturn, and were the founders of the nation : or because the star of Saturn possesses the highest orb and the greatest power among the seven planets, by which men are governed, and the most of the heavenly bodies exert their power and finish their course by the number *seven*. But, in what manner soever these rites were introduced, they have the sanction of antiquity.”*

Thus it appears from Tacitus, that some earlier writers carried back the existence of the Jews as a nation, nearly to the very commencement of the fabulous history of the Greeks. It is evident, that there was also a general belief, that the Israelites received their law from Moses, very soon after they left Egypt, and that it had the highest antiquity. Nor is it less clear, that there was a general tradition, that the Sabbath was instituted even before the existence of the Israelites as a nation. Many learned writers have produced very strong reasons for supposing, that the

* Tacit. hist. lib. 5.

Saturn of the heathens was the Noah of Scripture. According to this opinion, it would seem that the heathen nations traced back the consecration of the seventh day at least to the æra of the deluge. Without dwelling on these circumstances in which the account of Tacitus agrees with those already considered, I shall only further observe, that in what he says concerning the people being in danger of perishing by thirst, and the means by which they obtained relief, we may trace several of the facts recorded in Scripture, but blended together and mingled with fiction. Here there is an obvious allusion to what we are told concerning the Israelites travelling three days before they found water, as well as to their murmuring and dejection on this account. In the story concerning the rock shaded with wood, we have evidently a mixture of the circumstances related in Scripture, concerning the rock which was smitten by Moses, and the twelve fountains of Elim, where there were three score and ten *palm-trees*.*

The names of none of the Egyptian magicians are mentioned in the Pentateuch. But, from what the apostle Paul says concerning "Jannes and Jambres withstanding Moses,"† there is no reason to doubt, that the names of these persons, as being the chief of the magicians, and some other particulars concerning them, not recorded in Scripture, had been preserved among the Jews by tradition. Their names indeed are found in the Chaldee paraphrase of the Pentateuch. Jonathan thus renders Exod. vii. 11. "Jannes and Jambres, Egyptian magicians, also did in like manner, by the muttering of their enchantments." The names of these magicians are also mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud, in the book of Zohar, in Schalscheleth, and in Tanchuma.‡

But it deserves our particular attention, that these magicians seem to have been nearly as well known to heathen writers. Eusebius quotes a passage from Numenius, an ancient Pythagorean philosopher, which not only attests the scriptural account concerning the opposition of these magicians, but plainly shews a general belief, that Egypt, by the instrumentality of Moses, had been visited with severe plagues. "Jannes and Jambres," he says, "scribes of the religion of Egypt, at the time that the Jews were expelled from that country, were universally deemed inferior to none in acquaintance with magical arts. They were therefore both chosen, by the common consent of the Egyptians, to oppose themselves to Musæus," for thus Moses is sometimes called by the Greeks,§ "the leader of the Jews, a man whose prayers were remarkably prevalent with God. These persons were reckoned able to remove the calamities which Musæus had brought upon Egypt."|| Eusebius gives a similar testimony from

* Exod. xv. 27.

† 2 Tim. iii. 8.

‡ Vid. Fabric. Cod. Apoc. V. T. p. 816—819. Buxtorf. Lex. Talm. p. 945.

§ *Mouratog*.

|| Apud. Euseb. Præpar. lib. viii. c. 9. (Fabr. Cod. Apoc. V. T. vol. i. p. 817.)

Artapanus, who calls them "priests above Memphis," relating, that the king "threatened them with death, if they did not perform things equal to those done by Moses."* Pliny, whose information has been less distinct, mentions Moses and Jannes as Jewish magicians.† Apuleius also introduces Joannes, who is generally allowed to be the same as Jannes, among the chief magicians.‡

Artapanus, already mentioned, in his work *concerning the Jews*, gives the following relation: "Moses was shut up in prison by Nechephres, the king of the Egyptians, because he demanded the liberation of the Israelites. By night, the prison being opened by the will of God, he went forth, entered into the royal palace, stood before the sleeping monarch, and awaked him. He, being astonished at what had taken place, commanded Moses to tell him the name of that God who had sent him. Moses, approaching the ear of the king, told him this name. Upon hearing it, the king was struck dumb: but, when Moses laid hold of him, he revived."§ The leading circumstances here mentioned are entirely different from those recorded in the sacred history. There seems indeed to be an allusion to what was done by Moses, in declaring to Pharaoh the name of *JEHOVAH*, as the "God of the Hebrews;"|| and to Pharaoh's calling for Moses and Aaron *by night*.¶ But what especially deserves our notice, is, that the passage affords a satisfactory proof of a general tradition among the heathen, that Moses had wrought miracles in the presence of the king of Egypt, and even such as particularly affected himself.

The learned Allix has observed, that the memory of the destruction of the first-born was preserved among the Egyptians till after the birth of Christ. "For till then," he says, "they used to mark with red their sheep, their trees, their houses and lands, the day before the passover, as one may see in Epiphanius; which custom could proceed from no other cause, than from the Egyptians' fear of the like plague and mortality, that was once inflicted upon their fore-fathers; and from the hope of preventing it by such a kind of talisman, whereby they thought Moses had formerly saved the Israelites harmless from that great plague, only by sprinkling the blood of the lamb of the passover on the upper door-post of their houses."**

Allix does not quote the place, and I have not been able to find it in Epiphanius. But, at any rate, I would not lay much stress on this testimony, as it does not so properly belong to the present argument, being that of a Christian writer. Nor does it appear, that his evidence is supported by that of any other witness.

* Id. lib. ix. c. 27. † Hist. Nat. lib. xxx. c. 1. ‡ Apolog. II.

§ Ap. Clem. Alexandrin. Strom. lib. i. p. 252. || Exod. v. 1—2.

¶ Exod. xii. 31.

** Reflections on the Books of Scripture, vol. i p. 157, 158.

I proceed, therefore, to subjoin the testimony of two heathen writers, with respect to the miraculous passage of the Red Sea. Artapanus, as quoted by the celebrated Alexander Polyhistor, says, that the Egyptian priests were not agreed, whether the sea was divided by a supernatural power, or whether Moses and the Israelites only crossed over a small nook of it at low water, hitting the time so well, that Pharaoh, following their example, perished in the attempt. This writer informs us, the priests of Heliopolis adopted the former opinion, and those of Memphis the latter.*

According to Diodorus Siculus, a heathen historian of great character, the Ichthyophagi, who dwelt along the coasts of the Red Sea, towards the farther end of it, had a constant tradition, that that sea had been formerly divided by a strong wind; and that the waves being parted into two heaps, the bottom, which was left naked, had appeared full of verdure.†

Thus it appears, both from the internal evidence of the sacred books, and from collateral testimony, that there is no reason to doubt the truth of those miraculous events, which are recorded concerning the Israelites, in the first period of their history as a nation. I have formerly observed, that there is as little reason to doubt the scriptural account of those prior events, which more immediately concern mankind in general. We may justly infer the truth of the one from that of the other. As it appears unquestionable, that the religion contained in the books of Moses was given by God, being attested by those wonderful works which we have already considered; the truth of the sacred history, as far as it respects events of an earlier date, follows as a natural and necessary consequence. It is incredible, that God should miraculously attest a religion in one respect, and allow it to have a false foundation in another. For indeed, it was necessary that the great events recorded in the book of Genesis should be true, in order to the truth of the Jewish religion in general. They are recorded, not as detached facts, which have no proper connexion with the law contained in the following part of the Pentateuch, but as the very foundations on which this law rests. From an attentive consideration of some of these facts, it will appear that the law would have been imperfect, without the history in which these are recorded; that the reasons, expressly given for many of its precepts, if not unknown to the Israelites, when the law was revealed, must otherwise have been soon lost in the obscurity of tradition; and that the law would thus also have wanted some of its most powerful motives to obedience. If, therefore, it appear indisputable that the law, strictly so called, was given by God, and at his command written by a person, whose mission was attested by miracles; it follows, that we have the same evidence of the

* Euseb. Præpar. lib. iv. cap. 27.

† Lib. iii. c. 3.

divine original of the book of Genesis, which may be viewed as the foundation of the law.

This book contains a very striking and important concatenation of events. Some of these, as the history of creation, of the fall of man, and of the promise of a Saviour, have a primary place : others appear in subordination. But both are necessary. The ingenious artist, in imitating nature, does not merely exhibit the most prominent features or principal figures ; but also introduces the more delicate lines and more minute objects. For he knows, that without these, his piece, so far from pleasing the eye, would be only a disgusting mass of imperfection. From want of attention to the design of the Holy Spirit, in recording some of the greater events which appear in the sacred history, and also to the connexion, which those that are comparatively less have with the greater ; many, who believe the truth of revelation, continue blind to one of its peculiar beauties.

Some may rashly suppose, that it was unnecessary to carry back the Scripture-history to the creation of the world. The principal facts, may they say, must have been well known to the posterity of Jacob, by tradition. But the book of God was ultimately meant for the use of all nations. It was therefore highly proper that its history should commence with time itself. When Moses wrote, corruption had made a very great and general progress. Hence it was necessary, that the history of creation should be recorded by an unerring hand, that the memory of it might not be lost among the fables of the heathen. That men might compare their present state with that which they had lost, and have the fullest evidence of their need of redemption ; it was equally necessary that they should be supplied with a faithful account of the fall. The history of the promise of redemption was also necessary ; that men might expect a Saviour ; and that, when he should actually appear, they might certainly distinguish the person, especially as made known by his exclusive character, " the seed of the woman ;" and by his divine work, of repairing the ruins of the fall, and thus " destroying the works of the devil."

Although, as may afterwards appear, the great events from the creation, downwards, must have been known to the Israelites, it was necessary that they should have the sanction of divine authority, by means of a messenger whose mission God was pleased to attest ; that these events might be known, not merely by human testimony, but as matters of faith. It is not meant that this history rested on no ground but human testimony, before it was committed to writing. For the knowledge of it was transmitted, in former ages, by Patriarchs, who had the gift of inspiration. But from the death of Joseph, till the mission of Moses, we have no evidence that any of the Israelites were thus endowed. At any rate, it was the will of God, at this time, to transfer the faith of his

church from the traditional instructions even of inspired men, to a written revelation.

It was also necessary that these great events should be particularly set before the Israelites, in subserviency to that further revelation with which God favoured them, and the peculiar dispensation to which they were subjected. They are all to be viewed as so many motives to faith and obedience. Did not the sacred volume contain history, as well as doctrine, we should be at a loss to perceive the reasonableness and propriety of many of the laws enjoined on the Israelites. It needs scarcely to be observed, that the principal ordinances of the law have an immediate respect to the great events which took place in their separation as a people. The history of the destruction of all the first-born of Egypt, and of the salvation of the Israelites, shows the propriety of the consecration of the first-born to God, and of their redemption by a price.* Had there been no record of that awful judgment brought on the Egyptians, and of the means by which the Israelites were delivered, the ordinance of the passover would appear in a very different light. We perceive, not only the propriety of observing the feast of *Pentecost*, but of the season of it; when we learn from the history of Israel, that the law was revealed *fifty days*, as the word *Pentecost* signifies, after their departure from Egypt.† It is plainly declared, indeed, that the various ordinances of the law were themselves meant as historical monuments of the illustrious works of God in behalf of his people, for preserving the memory of these in all succeeding generations. Thus Moses explains the design of the law given by him: "When thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean these testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments which the Lord our God hath commanded you? Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt, and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. And the Lord shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes: And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers. And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day."‡

But it was not enough that they should be furnished with the history of the great events which peculiarly concerned them as a nation. It was of the greatest importance to this people, that the creation of the world should be set before them in the most striking light. Thus they were taught, that He, who gave the law by Moses, was indeed the Maker of heaven and earth; and were guarded against that foolish idea, so common among the heathen, that the god of one country had no sort of power over

* Exod. xiii. 11—15.

† Exod. xii. 2, 6.; xix. 1, 16. comp.

‡ Deut. vi. 20—24.

another. Being, by this means, brought back to their very origin; they might see, in the clearest manner, the absolute authority that God had over them, and his indisputable right to prescribe to them what laws soever he pleased. He at the same time magnified the sovereignty of his grace, in choosing the Israelites; as by this important record, he showed them that all the other nations of the earth stood in the same relation to him as a parent. We, therefore, find that these two ideas of his authority, as Lord of heaven and earth, and of his sovereignty in choosing this people, are sometimes conjoined, as arguments to obedience. "Now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but "to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love "him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and "with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the LORD, and "his statutes which I command thee this day for thy good? Behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens is the LORD's thy "God, the earth also with all that therein is. Only the LORD "had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their "seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day.*

As the law with respect to the Sabbath referred to the work of creation, the recorded history of this work afforded a powerful argument to obedience in this respect. The very language in which this precept was revealed from Mount Sinai, supposes that the Israelites were not only acquainted with the history of creation, but with this as "an old commandment from the beginning." We know, indeed, that God has a right to require obedience from all his rational creatures, without giving any reason but his own will; and that this is the formal reason of all obedience. But when we read the history of creation, and consider the unspeakable importance of a constant remembrance of this great work, we are under the necessity of admiring the wisdom of God, in not only appointing a weekly sabbath for the commemoration of it, but in enjoining the Israelites to observe a sabbath once in seven years, and another at the end of seven times seven.

God called his ancient people to confide in him as a Redeemer, who should deliver them from their enemies, and put them in possession of the promised land. Now, we cannot conceive a more proper mean for confirming their faith, than to trace back their history, through its various links, to the creation of all things. In this manner he shewed his right as well as his power to redeem; because they were the work of his own hands. He manifested his claim to their confidence as "a faithful creator." They had greatly forgotten him in Egypt, and been polluted with her abominations. But by this connected history, as attested by miracles, he gave them the fullest assurance that the God who now called them to a state of separation, from the rest of the nations, and to his service, was indeed the God who form-

* Deut. x. 12--15.

ed the world, and who alone had been worshipped by all their religious ancestors.

A particular account of the covenant made with Adam, of the fall, and of the consequent curse, was peculiarly necessary; because the law of Moses had so peculiar a relation to that covenant, both in its precept and in its penalty. The strictness, as well as the vast extent of the preceptive part of the Mosaic law, afforded a constant memorial of the perfection of obedience required by the covenant of works. The "just recompence of reward," connected with every transgression, and which left no hope of mercy, expressed the certainty and severity of that curse procured by the fall. They might still read the sentence of death pronounced on man, in those awful images of blood-shedding and burning which were constantly held up to their view.

It was necessary that they should be acquainted with the history of the first promise. This was of the greatest importance for illustrating the propriety of their separation from all other nations. For thus the promise of the distinction to be preserved between the seed of the woman and that of the serpent, was typically fulfilled. Thus also they might learn the design of their redemption from Egypt, and of the destruction of Pharaoh and his army. For this redemption was meant to confirm their faith in the first promise, and to assure them of the future destruction of that dragon, of whom Pharaoh was merely a type.

The whole history contained in the book of Genesis, from the creation till the time of the separation of Israel as a people, was necessary; that they and that all to whom the Scripture should eventually come, might perceive the propriety of this separation, and mark the gradual preparation made for it, in the separation of the posterity of Seth from that of the wicked Cain,—of Noah from the whole world lying in wickedness,—of Abraham from the rest of the descendants of Noah,—of Isaac from the rest of Abraham's posterity,—of Jacob from that of the profane Esau; that thus the Church, in all succeeding ages, might know the wonderful steps that God had taken for the preservation of a holy seed. A particular account of the call of Abraham, and of his separation from his own kindred, was especially necessary for illustrating the intention of God in giving the Israelites a law, and enjoining so many rites, which from their peculiarity formed a wall of partition between them and all neighbouring nations. All the ceremonial institutions, indeed, must have appeared as unmeaning and unprofitable services, without the light of the promise. They could have no just idea of their sacrifices and other rites of the same nature, without knowing that they all respected the *bruising* of the *heel* of the promised seed. On this great promise, did the various regulations, apparently so unimportant in themselves, with respect to the distinction of tribes

and families, depend. It was indeed a key to all the other promises given to the posterity of Jacob. They could have no just apprehensions concerning him who was foretold as "the *Shiloh*, as the Star," that should "arise out of Jacob," and as a prophet like unto Moses; they could not know either his character or his work, without having recourse to the promise given in paradise.

The law of Moses contains many other references to the antediluvian and patriarchal histories. As the law, which pronounced him accursed who hung on a *tree*,^a especially looked forward to the death of that glorious Surety by whom the curse was to be removed; it might be also meant to remind the church of the means by which the curse was introduced.^b The threatening, in case of disobedience, that the land should not yield her increase,^c evidently refers to the curse brought on the earth by the sin of man.^d The law against intermarriages with the heathen,^e is illustrated by the fatal consequences of this affinity in the case of those antediluvian professors of the true religion who married among the posterity of Cain; ^f and by the account we have of the care exercised by Abraham and Isaac in this respect.^g The laws making a distinction between some beasts as clean, and others as unclean,^h evidently respect the history of that distinction which had been known before the deluge.ⁱ The prohibition of the eating of blood,^j is only a revival of that precept given to the sons of Noah.^k In like manner, the command to kill any beast that had gored a man,^l is founded on what God said to Noah: "Surely your blood of your lives will I require: at the hand of every beast will I require it."^m The law ordaining that there should be no expiation for murder, but by the death of the murderer, was merely a repetition of another law given immediately after the deluge.ⁿ The very language of that prohibition, "Thou shalt not take a wife to her sister to vex her,"^o seems to be so expressed, as to remit the reader to the account given of the disturbances in the family of Jacob, which were owing to this circumstance.^p Had not the history of Jacob's sojourning and hardships been distinctly preserved, his posterity would at length have lost the meaning of that confession they were to make, when offering their first-fruits: "A Syrian, ready to perish, was my father."^q The law, enjoining kindness to the Edomites, evidently refers to the history of their descent from Esau, the brother of Jacob: "Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite: for he is thy brother."^r Was it commanded, that the land of Canaan should be divided by lot?^s It seems to have been one special

^a Deut. xxi. 22, 23.

^d Gen. iii. 17, 18.

^g Gen. xxiv. 3; xxviii. 6.

^j Lev. xvii. 10, 11.

^m Gen. ix. 5.

^o Lev. xviii. 18.

^r Deut. xxiii. 7.

^b Gen. iii. 17.

^c Deut. vii. 3, 4.

^e Lev. xi. 1, &c.

^k Gen. ix. 4.

ⁿ Numb. xxxv. 32, 33; Gen. ix. 6.

^p Gen. xxx. 15.

^s Num. xxvi. 55.

^c Lev. xxvi. 20.

^f Gen. vi. 2, 4.

ⁱ Gen. vii. 2.

^l Exod. xxi. 28.

^q Deut. xxvi. 5.

design of this injunction, to verify those predictions of Jacob on his deathbed, in which he had so particularly described the local situation and distinguishing properties of the possessions of some of the tribes.^a

Thus, the history contained in the Pentateuch and the Law remarkably elucidate each other. While the history is a commentary on the legal institutions, these institutions at the same time attest the truth of the history. It may be observed by the way, that as the history recorded in the book of Genesis, seems intended as a preparation for the Law, the principal part of the other histories of the Old Testament, is evidently meant as a confirmation of it. The certainty both of the threatenings, and of the promises of the law, is in a special manner illustrated by the book of Judges. For it is a continued narrative of the multiplied and severe punishments which God inflicted on the Israelites because of their apostacy ; and of the signal deliverances he gave them, by "raising up saviours," as soon as they returned to duty.

It has been seen, that the Israelites could not reject the book of Genesis, without denying the authority of a writer, whose mission had been attested by unquestionable miracles, without indeed virtually rejecting the law that God had given them, which was in an eminent degree founded on the important facts recorded in that book. But although the mission of Moses had not been so wonderfully attested, there is every reason to apprehend that the Israelites must have found themselves under a necessity of acknowledging the veracity of this history. For it would appear, that the principal events recorded in it were well known to them, so late as the period of their sojourning in the wilderness. Moses, in his song, desires the Israelites to appeal to their fathers with respect to the great events of former times, and particularly that of the division of the various nations of the world : "Remember," he says, "the days of old, consider the years of many generations : ask thy father, and he will shew thee : thy elders, and they will tell thee. When the most high divided to the nations their inheritance, he set the bounds of the people, according to the number of the children of Israel."^b Elsewhere, he speaks of the history of creation, as generally known in his time by tradition : "Ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one end of heaven unto the other,"^c &c.

It has been said by some infidels, both ancient and modern, that the writer of the book of Job was a Gentile. This book has even been *honoured* with the character of a "deistical composition," and been reckoned "older than any book in the Bible."^d Writers of this class, after paying such high compliments to the

^a Gen. xlix.

^b Deut. xxxii. 7, 8.

^c Deut. iv. 32.

^d Age of Reason, Part i. p. 23. Part ii. p. 30, 31.

book referred to, cannot reasonably object to its testimony. But it would appear they have not weighed it well. For as it bears all the marks of having been wrote in a very early period, in a variety of instances it coincides with the history contained in Genesis.

Here we have an evident reference to the longevity of the patriarchs, as contrasted with the great abbreviation of human life by the time that this book was written. Bildad the Shuhite says, "Inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers. For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days on earth are as a shadow."^a But short as human life appeared to Bildad, it is clear from this book, that it was far longer then than it has generally been since. For Job, before his afflictions, besides three daughters, had seven sons, who must have been come to maturity, as they were respectively settled in houses of their own. After his adversity, he lived an hundred and forty years : so that he must have seen nearly two centuries. Yet the duration of his life is not spoken of as extraordinary. It is only said, that he "died old, and full of days."^b

Eliphaz speaks of it as a thing perfectly known by uninterrupted tradition, that the earth was peopled by one race of men. "That which I have seen," he says, "I will declare ; which wise men have told from their fathers, and have not hid it : unto whom alone the earth was given, and no stranger passed among them."^c It does not certainly appear, whether he refers to the peopling of the earth at first by the posterity of Adam, or to its being given to the family of Noah after the deluge. For both these events were well known to these eastern sages. Job, speaking of what "the hand of the LORD hath wrought," says : "Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up : also he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth."^d Still more express is the language of Eliphaz : "Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden ? Which were cut down out of time ? Whose foundation was overflown with a flood ?" A little downward, he seems to refer to the destruction of the cities of the plain : "The remnant of them the fire consumeth."^e The inhabitants of these cities might poetically be called "the remnant of the wicked ;" because, like those who were destroyed by the deluge, they "said unto God, depart from us."^f

Job gives the very same account of the creation of man with that which we have in Genesis. He represents the body of man as moulded out of the dust, and his soul as an inspiration from the Almighty. "Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay. The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life."^g Is it inquir-

^a Job viii. 8, 9. ^b Chap. i. 2, 4 ; xlii. 16, 17. comp. ^c Chap. xv. 17—19.

^d Chap. xii. 9, 15.

^e Job xxii. 15, 16, 20.

^f Ver. 17.

^g Chap. x. 9 ; xxxiii. 4.

ed, whence they had this information? We learn that their tradition reached back to creation itself. Hence Zophar proposes this question; "Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed 'upon earth?'"^a Job alludes to the fall of man, and to his vain attempts to conceal his guilt from the all-seeing eye. "Doth he not see my ways,—if I covered my transgression like Adam, 'by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom?'"^b When he says, "Remember,—that thou hast made me as the clay, and wilt 'thou bring me into dust again?'"^c he seems to refer to the very language in which the curse was denounced; "Dust thou art, 'and unto dust shalt thou return.'"^d

There can be no doubt that these good men were acquainted with the promises of the Messiah, and particularly with the promise given immediately after the fall. Job and his friends speak of him in the same language with Jacob, although there is no evidence that these patriarchs were known to each other. Jacob describes the Messiah as the Angel-Redeemer.^e They also believed in him as an Angel, a Messenger, a Kinsman-Redeemer, as God, and as the Son of Man. Elihu speaks of the Messiah as "a messenger, an interpreter, one among a thousand, a ransom."^f "I know," saith Job, "that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall 'stand at the latter day'" (or, as the words may be read, "the last 'man,'" the last or second Adam) "upon the earth: And though 'after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I 'see God.'"^g In another place, according to the literal meaning of the language, he expresses his full persuasion of an interest in the intercession of this *God*. "Behold, my witness is in heaven, 'and my recorder is on high.—And he shall plead for man with 'God, even the Son of man for his friend.'"^h

Thus it appears, that the principal facts narrated in Genesis, are distinctly referred to in the book of Job, as well known by tradition at the time it was wrote. This testimony is unexceptionable: because there is not the least ground to suppose, that Job and his friends knew any thing of Moses, of the children of Israel, or, of consequence, of that revelation with which they were favoured.

So unquestionable, indeed, is the history given in the book of Genesis, with respect to creation, the deluge, and the other great events which took place before the separation of Israel, that the accounts of these things, which are scattered through the most ancient writers of the heathen, bear a striking analogy to the language of Scripture. From a careful examination of these, it will appear to every impartial reader, that the scriptural narrative has indisputable marks of the greatest antiquity and authenticity, as

^a Job xx. 4.

^c Chap. x. 9.

^e Gen. xlviii. 16.

^g Chap. xix. 25, 26.

^b Chap. xxxi. 4, 33.

^d Gen. iii. 19.

^f Job xxxiii. 23.

^h Chap. xvi. 19, 21.

being most consistent with itself, most worthy of God, and most consonant to reason ; and that the heathen writers, so far from having furnished materials to the sacred penmen, have either borrowed their accounts from them, and disguised them so as to suit their own interest, or collected the fragments of ancient tradition.

In these writings, there are various vestiges of the history of the destruction of Sodom, and the other cities of the plain. Strabo, after describing the Dead Sea, says ; “ It appears credible, “ from the accounts received among the natives, that there were “ formerly thirteen cities in this region, of which Sodom was the “ chief ; and of which they still point out the compass, extending “ sixty furlongs : but that, in consequence of earthquakes, and “ of flames and hot bituminous waters bursting forth, the lake “ which is now found there was formed, the rocks caught fire, and “ some of these cities were swallowed up, while others were “ abandoned by those who could escape from them.”^a

Tacitus also, after describing the Lake Asphaltites, says ; “ Not far hence are plains, which, as it is reported, being former- “ ly fruitful, and covered with large cities, were consumed by “ lightening. They assert, that the marks of this destruction re- “ main, as the ground, which has a burnt appearance, has lost its “ fertility. For all herbs and flowers, whether produced sponta- “ neously, or planted by man, as soon as they have apparently “ attained maturity, become black and empty, and vanish into ash- “ es.”^b

Solinus also writes ; “ At a considerable distance from Jeru- “ salem, there is a dismal hollow. That it has been struck “ from heaven,* is evident, from the blackness of the soil, and “ from its being reduced to ashes.”^c After mentioning the towns of Sodom and Gomorrah, he relates the common story with regard to the apples of Sodom, that they are externally fair, but filled with ashes. Other heathen writers relate the same story ; asserting also, that the waters of this lake are so impregnated with sulphur, that no fish can live in it, or bird fly over it. These accounts have been contradicted by some modern travellers. Such, however, being the testimony of so many ancient writers, it may be supposed, as the authors of the *Universal History* observe, that the quality of the waters may have been greatly altered through length of time.

The account given, by some heathen writers, of the DELUGE, agrees in its leading circumstances with that of inspiration. Berossus, the Chaldean, who lived in the time of Alexander the Great, and wrote the history of the Babylonians, relates, that the general deluge happened in the reign of *Xisuthrus*, the tenth king of Babylon. According to this writer, *Chronus* or *Saturn* appeared to

^a Geog. lib. xvi.

^b Histor. lib. v.

* “ De cœlo tactum.”

^c Hist. cap. 36.

Xisuthrus, in a dream, and warned him, that on the fifteenth of the month *Dasius*, mankind would be destroyed by a flood : and therefore commanded him to write down the original, intermediate state, and end of all things, and bury the writings under ground in *Sipptara*, the city of the sun ; that he should also build a ship, and go into it with his relations and dearest friends, having first furnished it with provisions, and taken into it fowls and four-footed beasts ; and that, when he had provided every thing, and was asked whither he was sailing, he should answer, “ To the “ gods, to pray for happiness to mankind.” Xisuthrus did not disobey, but built a vessel, whose length was five furlongs, and breadth two furlongs. He put on board all that he was directed, and entered it with his wife, children, and friends. The flood being come, and soon ceasing, Xisuthrus let out certain birds, which finding no food, nor place to rest upon, returned again to the ship. Xisuthrus, after some days, let out the birds again ; but they came back to the ship, having their feet daubed with mud. But when they were let go the third time, they came no more to the ship ; whereby Xisuthrus understood that the earth appeared again. Thereupon he made an opening between the planks of the ship, and seeing that it rested upon a certain mountain, he came out with his wife, and his daughter, and his pilot : and having worshipped the earth, and raised an altar, and sacrificed to the gods, he, and those who went out with him, disappeared. They who were left behind in the ship, finding that Xisuthrus, and those who accompanied him, did not return, went out themselves to seek for him. But Xisuthrus was no more seen by them : only a voice came out of the air, which enjoined them, as their duty was, to be religious ; and informed them, that, on account of his piety, he was gone to dwell with the gods, and that his wife, and daughter, and pilot, were partakers of the same honour. It also directed them to return to Babylon, and that, as the fates had ordained, they should take the writings from Sippara, and communicate them to mankind : and told them, that the place where they were was the country of Armenia. When they had heard this, they offered sacrifice to the gods, and unanimously went to Babylon : and when they came thither, they dug up the writings at Sippara, built many cities, raised temples, and rebuilt Babylon.^a

This account is evidently mixed with fable, and cast into such a form as would be most grateful to the pride of the Babylonians, and agree best with their system of idolatry. But its coincidence with the scriptural history of the deluge, not only in the leading facts, but in a variety of minute circumstances, must strike every impartial reader. Not to mention the taking of fowls and quadrupeds in the ark ; who is there that does not see the Mosaic account of the raven and dove, in that given of Xisuthrus letting out certain birds ? or that of the ark’s resting *upon the mountains of*

^a Alexand. Polyhistor, ex Beroso, apud Syncell. Ancient Univ. Hist. vol. i. p. 194, 195.

Ararat, in its being here said to rest on a certain mountain? The circumstance of Xisuthrus making an opening between the planks of the ship, and thus *seeing* that it rested, plainly refers to the peculiar structure of the ark, as it had no window on the side. We know also, that Noah built an *altar*, and offered up *sacrifices*, as soon as he left the ark. According to Berosus, the mountain on which the ship rested was in Armenia. But in this very country the mountains of *Ararat* are generally placed. Is *Babylon* said to be rebuilt by those who left the ark? The tower of *Babel* seems to have been the first building, of any importance, undertaken by the posterity of Noah. It is not improbable, that the story of the disappearance of Xisuthrus, of his not being found by his relations, and of their being informed, that, on account of his piety, he was gone to dwell with the gods, might arise from an indistinct tradition concerning *Enoch*, the great-grandfather of Noah, of whom it is declared, that he *walked with God*, and was *not found*, because God had *translated* him.^a For nothing is more common with the profane writers of antiquity, than to confound the history of one illustrious person with that of another; especially when they relate the achievements of their gods or heroes.

It was natural for Berosus to gratify the pride of his countrymen, by pretending that *Babylon* existed before the flood, and that when the flood came, the tenth king of *Babylon* was on the throne. But how happens it that Xisuthrus should be precisely the *tenth* king? Here the truth is evidently disguised by national pride. The salvation ascribed to Noah in Scripture, is here ascribed to this king of *Babylon*; and we know that Noah was exactly the *tenth* from Adam. Thus Berosus, to give the greater celebrity to his nation, has made the origin of its empire coeval with creation.

Let us compare the account given by Berosus with that of the Holy Scriptures, and try which of them is most worthy of credit. Berosus not only represents the deluge as a judgment from God, but declares, that the preservation of Xisuthrus and his companions was in consequence of a divine revelation. According to this account, however, this awful judgment was inflicted without any previous warning being given to the rest of mankind, without their having one call of repentance. This is highly derogatory to the divine goodness; and very different from the scriptural account, which represents God as exercising his long-suffering towards the old world for an hundred and twenty years, during which time he favoured them with the ministry of Noah, "a preacher of righteousness."^b According to Berosus, that very man, who was so highly favoured of heaven, shewed no compassion to any of his brethren of mankind, but to a few relations and friends. So far from warning the rest of men, and thus discover-

^a Gen. v. 24.; Heb. xi. 5.

^b Gen. vi. 3.; 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20.

ing that boldness which a revelation from heaven must be supposed to have inspired, although the sovereign of a great people, he is described as sneaking away from them, like one under the impulse of terror, by assigning a false reason for his embarkation. Nay, the heathen writer makes his god command Xisuthrus to act this very part. He makes Saturn himself the author of that cruel lie, which not only deprived the greatest part of mankind of any means of repentance, but which tantalized them with hopes of an increase of happiness, when destruction was hastening upon them.

I shall only add, that the story of Xisuthrus worshipping the earth, immediately on his deliverance, is worthy of the rest of the heathen mythology. But the history itself seems to give the lie to this circumstance. Could this species of worship ever appear more irrational, than at the very time that man had such striking evidence of the *earth being cursed* ?^a

The accounts given of the deluge by Abydenus, another Chaldean,^b and also by Alexander Polyhistor,^c agree in almost every circumstance with that of Berosus. The history of this event, as given by the Greeks, harmonizes with these. Only, they call him Deucalion, who by the Chaldeans is called Xisuthrus. But it was customary with the Greeks, even when narrating facts which they had learned from other nations, to change or to translate names. As they called Saturn *Chronos*, we learn from Philo-Byblius, the translator of Sanchoniatho, that the deity, called Chronos, received the name of *Il* from the Phenicians. Now, as the Phenician language was radically the same with the Hebrew, it has been inferred, that the scriptural name of *El*, given to the true God, was transferred to Chronos or Saturn, who is represented as foretelling the deluge.

Various writers, both heathen and Christian, have asserted, that the remains of the ark were long preserved on one of the mountains of Armenia ; and that the people of that country used pieces of the wood or pitch belonging to it as amulets.^d

Sir William Jones, speaking of one of the Chinese fables, says : “ Although I cannot insist with confidence, that the *rain-bow* in the Chinese fable alludes to the Mosaic narrative of the flood, nor build any solid argument on the divine personage *NIU-VA*, of whose character, and even of whose sex, the historians of China speak very doubtfully ; I may nevertheless assure you, after full inquiry and consideration, that the Chinese, like the Hindoos, believe the earth to have been wholly covered with water, which, in works of undisputed authenticity, they describe as *flowing abundantly, then subsiding, and sepa-*

^a Gen. viii. 21.

^b Ap. Euseb. Præpar. lib. ix. cap. 12.

^c Ap. Cyril. cont. Julian lib. i. Vid. Bocharti Phaleg. lib. i. c. 1.

^d Berosus ap. Joseph. Antiq. lib. i. cap. 4. Vid. Grot. de Veritate, lib. i. sect. 16. ; Bocharti Phaleg. lib. i. cap. 3.

"rating the higher from the lower age of mankind ; that the division of time, from which their poetical history begins, just preceded the appearance of FO-HI on the mountains of *Chin* ; but that the great *inundation* in the reign of YAO was either confined to the low lands of his kingdom, if the whole account of it be not a fable, or if it contain any allusion to the flood of Noah, has been ignorantly misplaced by the Chinese annalists."^a

With respect to CREATION, we find that, according to the Phenician theology, "The first principles of the universe were a dark and windy air, (or a spirit of dark air, and a turbid chaos involved in darkness.) These things were infinite, and for many ages had no bounds. But when the spirit was affected with love towards its own principles, and a mixture took place, that conjunction was called *desire*. Such was the beginning of the formation of all things. But the spirit itself acknowledged no formation. From this conjunction of the spirit was formed *mot*, which some call *mud* ; others, a corruption of a watery mixture ; and of this came the seed of all creatures, and the generation of the universe. There were certain animals which had no sense, from which proceeded intelligent animals, called *Zo-phasemin*, that is, the *contemplators of heaven*, being formed alike in the shape of an egg : and the mud, the sun and the moon, the stars and the greater constellations shone forth."^b Eusebius has observed that this system tends to introduce atheism. But others have viewed it more favourably, and have remarked the coincidence between it and the scriptural account of creation, in various instances. Cudworth seems to think that Sanchoniatho teaches the same doctrine with Thales, who was a Phenician by extraction, and held that water was the first principle of all corporeal things, but that God was that mind which formed all things out of water. It is probable that this was the opinion of the Phenician writer, as he asserts that the spirit itself acknowledged no formation, that is, was uncreated.

The idea of "a turbid chaos, involved in darkness," of which Sanchoniatho speaks, is evidently borrowed from Gen. i. 2. "The earth was without form, and void ; and darkness was upon the face of the deep." Bochart observes, that *ερεβος*, the word used by the translator of Sanchoniatho to express the *obscurity* of the chaos, as it is primarily from *ερεος*, darkness, is originally from the Hebrew word *ereb*, evening.^c When it is said that "the *spirit* was affected with love towards its own principles," and that this "was the beginning of the formation of all things," it is scarcely conceivable that there is not an allusion to the language of inspiration : "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." For the Hebrew word *rahhaqah*, implies the

^a Asiatic Researches, vol. ii. disc. xxv. On the Chinese.

^b Euseb. Præpar. lib. i. cap. 10. ^c Gen. i. 5.

idea of *love*, as it expresses the incubation of a female bird. By the *Zophasemin*, some understand angels as meant; others, the heavenly bodies, which many of the heathen supposed to be intelligent, and therefore adored as deities. Grotius observes, that Sanchoniatho, after the example of Moses, has made light prior to the sun; and that the *mot* of the former, is merely the *abyss* or *deep* mentioned by the latter.^a

The Phenician system of the universe is evidently far less consonant to reason, than what we have in Scripture. Admitting that, according to this system, the "spirit of dark air" was uncreated, still it is represented as material, and thus eternity and infinity are ascribed to matter. It is also destitute of that simplicity which characterizes the scriptural account, and which is no inconsiderable proof of its greater antiquity. So allegorical is the doctrine of Sanchoniatho, as to indicate that this is not the first state in which it appeared. Men in an early stage of society, often use figurative language; but their ideas are simple. They use such language, not for obscuring the thought, but for expressing it with greater energy. When the very ideas in which they communicate a doctrine are figurative and emblematical, it shows a more advanced state of society, and gives reason for supposing, either that the doctrine has been derived from others, or that, although formerly known to all, it has become obscure through length of time, and that the more learned wish to conceal it from the vulgar. It may also be observed, that the farther we go back in examining the opinions of any people, we have the greater evidence of their ascribing almost every great effect immediately to the First Cause. It is not till men have for some time addicted themselves to philosophical researches, that, in regard to effects of this kind, they give much attention to secondary causes.

It may be added, that Sanchoniatho acknowledges his obligations, in the compilation of his history, to Jerombaal, whom he calls "priest of the God *Iao*." Now, the name *JEHOVAH* has been thus rendered in Greek. For Diodorus says, that "Moses among the Jews ascribed his laws to the God who is called *Iao*."^b Hence, as well as from the resemblance of his cosmogony to the scriptural account of the creation, it has been supposed, that the person referred to by the Phenician historian, was Gideon, who was also called Jerubbaal;^c and that though he was not of the tribe of Levi, he might by heathens be considered as a priest, because he not only set up an ephod in his own city, to which all Israel resorted, but formerly, at the express command of God, had offered sacrifice.^d

The Egyptian theology, with respect to the creation, was very similar to the Phenician. According to this, "When the uni-

^a De Verit. lib. i. sect. 16.

^b Lib. i.

^c Jud. vii. 1.

^d Judg. viii. 27; vi. 25, 26. Vid. Bocharti Canaan, lib. ii. cap. 17. p. 858; Fabric. Biblioth. Græc. vol. i. lib. i. cap. 28.

“verse first coalesced, heaven and earth were of one form, their nature being blended together. But afterwards, the air began to have a constant motion, its fiery particles flew to the upper regions, and hence proceeded the rapid circular motion of the sun and other stars. The muddy and turbid matter, after being incorporated with the humid, subsided in one place by its own weight. Thus, the sea was formed of the watery parts, and the earth of the more solid. The humid matter being fecundated by the heat of the sun, all kinds of creatures were produced.” Here, although there is no mention of an efficient cause, there is no inconsiderable agreement, both as to matter and order, with the Mosaic account. We find heaven and earth blended; the motion of the earth; the mud, deep or abyss; the light; then the heavenly bodies; the separation of heaven, sea and earth; then, the formation of living creatures.^a

Megasthenes ascribes the same doctrine to the Indians. According to this ancient writer, they held, that “God created the universe; that he governs and pervades it; and that water was the first principle of all things.”^b Clemens Alexandrinus gives a remarkable extract from the same writer. “Megasthenes,” he says, “who lived with Seleucus Nicator, most plainly writes in his third book concerning Indian affairs: ‘All the things which have been said by the ancients concerning nature, are also expressed by those who have philosophized out of Greece; as by the Bramins among the Indians, and by those who are called Jews in Syria.’”^c

The same coincidence is observable in the writings of other heathens. All their accounts of a *chaos*, are either borrowed from the Jews, or derived from ancient tradition. The heathens themselves ascribe this doctrine to the latter source. Some of them seem to have attributed it to a divine revelation. This idea is contained in the language of Numenius the philosopher, quoted by Porphyry, who evidently refers to Moses, when he says, that “the prophet hath affirmed, that the Spirit of God was carried about (εμφερεσθαι) on the waters.” Plato seems to acknowledge, that the hints which he and others had concerning the origin of all things, proceeded at first from a sacred fountain. For he says in his *Timæus*: “It is proper that I who speak, and that you who hear, should remember that we possess human nature only, and that therefore we can merely look for some probable fable or tradition. Nor is it lawful for us to inquire further.”

As all things, according to the scriptural account, were created by the word of God, the heathen had some ideas on this head also. Thus Tertullian; “Your wise men were of opinion, that the *Word* and *Wisdom*, which they call *Logos*, framed the world. Zeno says, That this *Word* was the author of order.”^d To

^a Diodor. Sicul. ap. Grot. ubi sup. .
^c Strom. lib. 1. p. 224.

^b Ap. Strab. lib. xv.
^d Apol. c. xxi.

the same purpose the philosopher and poet Epicharmus ; " From the *Logos*, or Reason of God, the reason of man is derived." The language, quoted by some ancient writers from the songs ascribed to Orpheus, is very remarkable ; " I call to witness that voice of the Parent, which he first uttered when he founded the universe by his counsels."^a

Sanchoniatho, the Phenician historian, calls the first human pair *Protagonus* and *Aeon*. These, indeed, are only the Greek words, which Philo-Biblius, who translated Sanchoniatho's history from the Phenician, uses to express the meaning of the names given them in the original. But it is generally admitted, that by these are meant Adam and Eve ; as *Protagonus* signifies *first-produced*, and *Aeon*, or *Αἰων*, *life*. The latter bears a near resemblance to *Eve*, both in sense and sound. For *Havah*, in Hebrew, signifies *life*, or *living*. " The first men," he says, " were made from the *κολπια* of the wind." It has been supposed with the greatest probability, that the word *κολπια* is formed from the Hebrew, *Kol-pijah*, the *voice of the mouth of the Lord*. If this be admitted, the phrase has a meaning : for it evidently respects the formation of man by the word and inspiration of the Almighty. If not, no reasonable idea can be affixed to the language. Is it supposed that some peculiar virtue is here ascribed to the wind ? Would this make the system more rational ? Can the wind animate dead clay ? Is it not far more natural to ascribe the creation of man to God, than to the action of the wind : and therefore far more natural to suppose, that the former is the original idea, and the latter only a corruption of it ?

The ancient heathen represented the first man as partaking of both sexes. They therefore called him *ανδρογυνος*, literally man-woman. This evidently alludes to what we have in Scripture. But it will readily occur to every reasonable person, that the scriptural doctrine of the woman being formed immediately by divine power out of a part of the substance of the man, has far more intrinsic evidence of having been the original doctrine, than that of one person possessing both sexes, and thus having a natural power of individual procreation, a power to which there is nothing analogous in nature.

According to Sanchoniatho, Eve found out the food which is gathered from trees. Here, undoubtedly, there is a traditionary reference to that fatal discovery which was first made by the woman ; when " she saw that the tree was good for food, and that " it was pleasant to the eyes."^b The name of Eve is also supposed to have been preserved in the Grecian worship. Grotius observes, that in the most ancient mysteries of the Greeks the exclamation *Eva* was used, and a serpent shown at the same time.^c

^a Grot. i. 16.

^b Gen. iii. 6.

^c Grot. de Verit. not. ad lib. i. sect. 16.

There are various traditions preserved among the heathen, which are evidently corruptions of the important history of the FALL. "The Brachmans of Persia," says M. Bayle, "give a variety of accounts concerning a great giant, who was placed in a beautiful garden, which, upon certain conditions, he was to possess for ever. But one evening, when it was duskish, an evil spirit or devil came to tempt him, and offered him a vast sum of money; which he resolutely refused, not knowing the value of it. But at last the devil brought him a woman, with whom he was so charmed, that, not any longer observing the conditions proposed to him, he was expelled from the garden."^a We need not wonder that the history of the fall has been so corrupted by heathens, when many Christians have explained it much in the same manner; supposing most absurdly, that the eating of the tree of knowledge allegorically represents the connexion of the sexes, as if this had been incompatible with a state of innocence.

Maimonides gives a particular account of various works of the idolatrous Sabii, who lived in India and other countries. He says, that "they all believed that the *first Adam* was procreated of man and woman, like the rest of men; that, notwithstanding, they highly extolled him, asserting that he was the Apostle of the Moon, and called men to her worship; and that he composed some books on the culture of the earth." He warns his reader against being misled by the accounts given in the books of these idolaters, saying; "As to what *they* relate concerning the first Adam, the serpent, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and garments which were not formerly in use; beware, lest it carry away thy understanding, and thou shouldst apprehend that these things happened either to Adam, or to any other." Here he refers to the following fabulous account, contained in one of their writings: "It is there narrated," he says, "that the first Adam wrote in his book, that there is a certain tree in India, whose branch, when fallen to the earth, creeps like a serpent: that there is another tree, whose root has a human form, and a powerful voice, and utters distinct words; also, that there is a certain herb, which, if it be taken and suspended in the neck, renders a man invisible, so that it cannot be perceived into what place he enters, nor whence he departs; but that if it be burnt as incense in the open air, the most tremendous noises and thunders are heard in the adjacent atmosphere, as long as the smoke ascends."^b Although Maimonides seems to have been ignorant of the circumstance, they seem to have accommodated their fable to the natural history of that famous tree in India, called the Banyan tree, the branch of which, when fallen to the earth, might indeed be said to creep like a serpent.

Grotius asserts, that the same history of the fall is found among

^a Dict. t. i. p. 1106. Fabricii Cod. Apoc. Vet. Test. vol. i. p. 102.

^b More Nevochim Par. iii. c. 29.

the inhabitants of Pegu, and other idolatrous nations of India ; and that the Bramins are acquainted with the name of Adam.^a In the Island of Ceylon, in the neighbourhood of the Peninsula of India, they pretend to point out the footsteps of Adam on a mountain called Pico de Adam. The inhabitants make a religious procession round this mountain yearly. The eastern tradition is, that when Adam was driven out of Paradise, he fled to Ceylon, and did penance for several years on this mountain.^b

So striking, in a variety of instances, is the resemblance between the sacred history of these events, and the heathen traditions, that a believer could hardly wish it greater. Did they perfectly agree, instead of confirming, it would weaken the evidence of the necessity of revelation. For had tradition perfectly preserved the memory of these important facts, it could hardly be supposed, that it had grossly corrupted doctrines. Infidels, in this case, instead of being convinced, that divine revelation was necessary, might argue, from the integrity of tradition concerning facts, with far greater plausibility than they do as matters stand, not only that the writers of Scripture had borrowed from heathen tradition, but that the doctrines of heathenism could not be so corrupted as the friends of revelation assert, while its history was admitted to be so entire.

^a More Nevochim Par. iii. c. 29.

^b Fabricii Cod. Vet. Test. p. 30 ; Eutyck. Annal. ap. Univ. Hist. i. 149.

DISSERTATION II.

PROVING, THAT THE BOOKS ASCRIBED TO MOSES WERE ACTUALLY WRITTEN BY HIM, AND THAT HE WROTE THEM BY DIVINE INSPIRATION.

I NOW proceed to shew, that Moses actually wrote the five books which bear his name, and that he wrote them by divine inspiration. It has been already proved, that they could not have been received as genuine by the Israelites, in any later period than that to which they have been generally assigned ; that the truth of the great events recorded concerning themselves as a nation, must have been certainly known to them at the time they received these books ; and that they must have been pretty well acquainted with the principal facts regarding the history of the patriarchs, and of mankind in general. Here I might leave the argument ; as it necessarily follows, that the Jewish religion had a divine original, having been attested by the greatest miracles. But, as it has not been denied by infidels only, that the Pentateuch was written by Moses ; as not a few, who have professed Christianity, have injured truth, and perhaps unwittingly weakened the evidence of revelation, by admitting, that the books of the law, as we have them, were not written by Moses, but compiled by others ; it seems necessary to shew the falsity of this doctrine.

I. It appears from these books themselves, that they were written by Moses. After he had "told the people *all* the words of the LORD, and *all* the judgments," he "wrote *all* the words of the LORD." Afterwards, "he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people : and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient."^a When he "thus wrote the book of the covenant," he did so according to the express command of God, and therefore under his infallible direction. "The LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words : for after the tenor of these words, I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel."^b

^a Exod. xxiv. 3, 4, 7.

^b Exod. xxxiv. 27.

He also wrote the account of the discomfiture of Amalek.—For after the history of this event, it is declared, that “the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua; for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.”^a Is it at all probable, that Moses should write the history of this war with Amalek, and use no means for recording other transactions of no less importance? Or that he should be expressly commanded to write this account, and receive no such command in other instances; although it might not seem necessary to mention the circumstance on every occasion? The very narrative of this victory bears internal evidence, that it was written in connexion with the preceding part of Exodus. Joshua, Aaron, and Hur, are here introduced, without a single hint with respect to the offices or stations of these persons. This undoubtedly supposes, that, in the apprehension of the writer, they were already well known to the reader, as being particularly described in the preceding part of the book. “The rod of God” is also mentioned, without any reason being assigned for the designation; which Moses would scarcely have done, had he not already given a particular account of it.^b

He also wrote the journeys of the Israelites. “by the commandment of the LORD.”^c After this is mentioned, there immediately follows a compendious view of these. But it is unnatural to suppose, that nothing more is meant than that he wrote this summary. These journeys had already been particularly described, in connexion with the rest of their history, in the book of Exodus, and in the preceding part of Numbers. Thus when it is said, “Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys,” it seems most natural to conclude, that he speaks of what he had already done; and that he afterwards proceeds to give a short itinerary, compiled from the larger account already written, and blended with the rest of the history. The propriety of giving such an abstract here, appears from this consideration, that their journeys in the wilderness were now terminated; they were encamped in the plain of Jordan; and had only to cross this river in order to obtain possession of the promised land.^d

Near the end of Deuteronomy, it is said, “Moses wrote the law, and delivered it to the priests, the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and unto all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel, in their

^a Exod. xvii. 14.

^c Numb. xxxiii. 2.

^b Exod. xvii. 9, 10.

^d Numb. xxxiii. 49. comp. with Deut. i. 1, 5.

"hearing.—And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end
 "of writing *the words* of this law in a book, until they were
 "finished; that Moses commanded the Levites which bare the
 "ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, Take this book of
 "the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the
 "LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee.
 "Gather unto me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers,
 "that I may speak *these words* in their ears, and call heaven and
 "earth to record against them.—And Moses spake in the ears of
 "all the congregation of Israel, *the words* of this song, until
 "they were ended."^a

From this passage it is evident, that the term *law*, as used in the Pentateuch, is not confined to the precepts, statutes and judgments given to the Israelites, but includes other things delivered by the ministry of Moses for their instruction. For there can be no doubt, that the prophetic song referred to, was added by Moses himself to what was formerly written in that book which was to be laid up beside the ark. He had already written the preceding part of the book, and delivered it to the priests.^b Afterwards, he received a command from God to *write* this song, which he immediately obeyed. For it is said, "Moses therefore wrote
 "this song the same day."^c Now, it appears that he demanded the book of the law from the priests, and wrote it there. This is not only implied in what is afterwards said of his "making an
 "end of writing the words of this law in a book," although it had been already declared, that he "wrote this law:" but when it follows, that he commanded the elders to be gathered, that he might "speak these words in their ears," it undoubtedly respects *these words* which he had newly written in the book of the law, afterwards expressly designed, "*the words* of this song."^d

There is every reason to suppose that this "book of the law," in which Moses wrote his song, was the very same with that in which he had formerly written the history of Israel's victory over Amalek. For this was written, not merely for present use, but for "a memorial" in succeeding generations.^e Now, as there was only one book committed to the care of the priests and elders, only one book laid up beside the ark; we must suppose, either that Moses disobeyed God, in using no means for preserving this history, and making it a memorial, or that it was included in the same book which contained the law, strictly so called, his song, and whatever else he wrote. As he also wrote the journeys of the children of Israel, the same care was not exercised about this writing, unless it was included in the same book.

It cannot indeed be rationally imagined, that Moses could write all this law, without intermixing history, in various instances,

^a Deut. xxxi. 9—11. 24—30.

^c Ver. 19, 22.

^e Exod. xvij. 14.

^b Deut. xxxi. 9.

^d Ver. 24, 28, 30, comp.

with precepts or threatenings. For many of these immediately respected facts which had recently taken place, and were delivered in consequence of these facts. Besides, their propriety could not be so well perceived by posterity, unless the facts themselves were related, together with the precepts or threatenings; nor would the motives to obedience have been equally strong. Among these we may reckon the ordinance, that no priest should drink wine or strong drink before entering into the tabernacle, which was delivered in consequence of the judgment inflicted on Nadab and Abihu.^a Can it be believed that Moses would barely record the ordinance, without taking the least notice of the mournful occasion? Was it not one of the precepts given by God, that the Israelites should "vex the Midianites?"^b Can we suppose that Moses would record this, and entirely overlook the occasion; of which we have a particular account in the preceding part of the chapter? Many examples of the same kind might be given; but these may suffice.

II. That all the five books ascribed to Moses, were really written by him, under divine inspiration, has been acknowledged by the Jews in every age. This is indeed one of the articles of their creed, the denial of which would subject any Jew to the character of an apostate. It is thus expressed: "The whole law, from the very first word, *Bereschit*, (that is, *In the beginning*,) to the last words, *In the sight of all Israel*, were written by Moses from the mouth of God."^c This is not merely the faith of the modern Jews. We have satisfying evidence, that their ancestors, for some thousands of years, were of the same sentiments.

It may be necessary to observe, that the five books which constitute the Pentateuch, are indiscriminately called by the Jews *the law*, *the law of Moses*, and *the book of the law*. There is no certain evidence that the Pentateuch was originally divided into five books. For, in the Hebrew, these books are named merely from the first word of each book; which makes it probable, that the divisions are not of equal antiquity with the books themselves. This, it would seem, had been the opinion of the seventy interpreters; as they have not translated the Hebrew titles of the five books, but given them new ones in Greek, expressive of the principal subject of each. Although, however, the books had been thus divided by the original writer, it was natural to speak of them, without regard to this distinction, as being all contained in one volume or book, which was laid up beside the ark. That they did so, from a very early period, appears from a variety of evidence.

It is well known, that while our Saviour abode in our world, the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures were commonly spoken of as consisting of three principal parts, *the Law*, *the Prophets*,

^a Lev. x. 1—10.

^b Numb. xxv. 17, 18.

^c Witsii Miscell. v. i. Præf. sect. vii.

and the *Psalms*. As the *Psalms* was the general designation for all the canonical writings beside the law and the prophecies, the whole of the Pentateuch was called the *law*.

On one occasion, our Lord speaks of the *writings* of Moses in the plural number.^a It has been observed that the word, which in Hebrew signifies a *book*, is often rendered in the Septuagint by *γραμματα*, the word here used in the Greek. Whence the language may be equivalent to the *books* of Moses. Our Lord might speak in the plural, in reference to the common divisions of the Pentateuch. At any rate, he speaks of it as then universally admitted, that Moses was really the amanuensis of the different books or writings which bear his name. Had there been any doubt on this head among the Jews of that age, it is not probable that his language, especially as it was that of crimination, would have passed without contradiction.

But this was admitted by the Sadducees, as well as the Pharisees. They, who scarcely agreed in any thing else, agreed in ascribing the five books to Moses. For our Lord, when reasoning with the Sadducees in support of the resurrection, silenced them with these words: "Have ye not read in the book of Moses, 'how in the bush, God spake to him, saying, I am the God of 'Abraham?'" &c.^b Now, this quotation is from the book of Exodus. But if even the Sadducees had denied that any one of the five books was written by Moses, they would undoubtedly have denied the force of our Saviour's argument. According to their usual temper, they would at least have discovered some occasion for cavilling, as he called the whole of the Pentateuch "the book 'of Moses,'" while they only acknowledged a part of it as written by him.

So firm, and so universal was this persuasion, that all the books of the law were often simply called *Moses*: "They have *Moses* 'and the prophets.'"^c The apostle James, while he uses this very language, refers to a standing practice among the Jews: "*Moses* of old time hath in every city them that preach him, 'being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day.'"^d It is evident that by *Moses* he means all the five books which bear his name. For, with the Jews, the whole Pentateuch is divided into fifty-four sections, that it may be publicly read through every year, an allowance being made for the intercalated years, in which there are fifty-four sabbaths. It cannot be doubted, that this division is of great antiquity, as James refers to it as existing "of 'old time.'" Some of the Jews ascribe it to Moses himself; others, with greater probability, to Ezra. Now, the apostle evidently alludes to the established custom of reading one of these sections in the synagogue every sabbath. Thus, it is plain, that he gives the general designation of *Moses* to all the books of the

^a John v. 47.

^c Luke xvi. 29.

^b Mark xii. 26; Luke xx. 37, 40.

^d Acts xv. 21.

law. Paul refers to the same practice, while he expresses himself in the very same manner : " When *Moses* is read, the veil is " on their heart."^a Paul, who " touching the law" was " a Pharisee," certainly expresses the conviction of all his brethren, as to the extent of that designation, when he reasons in this manner : " Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear *the law* ? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons ; the one by " a bond-woman, the other by a free-woman," &c.^b But this quotation is from the book of Genesis : and whatever his own ideas had been, when reasoning with Jews or judaizing Christians, he would not have laid the stress of his argument on a foundation to which his adversaries could have made the least objection. For in this case, they had only to reply, that Paul reasoned from a book which they did not consider as part of the law.

But this sentiment may be traced much farther back. It was the firm persuasion of the Jews who had returned from the captivity, that all which was called the law of Moses was of divine authority. For it is said of Ezra, that he " was a ready scribe in " the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given."^c They were no less persuaded that all the books of the Pentateuch were written by Moses, and were therefore entitled to be called his law. With respect to Deuteronomy, no proof is necessary ; as some, who deny that the other four books were written by Moses, suppose that the name of the law of Moses is distinctively given to Deuteronomy, as having been mostly written by him.

Various passages in Exodus may be viewed as referred to by Ezra and Nehemiah, under the name of *the law*, or *the law of Moses*. But as the substance of the laws contained in Exodus is repeated in Deuteronomy, it is uncertain which of these books is immediately referred to.^d

After the second temple was finished, " they set the priests in " their divisions, and the Levites in their courses, for the service " of God, which is at Jerusalem ; as it is written in the book of " Moses."^e Here there is an evident reference to what we have in the third and eighth chapters of Numbers, where these ordinances are to be found. Leviticus was also considered as a part of the law. For it is referred to, under the name of " the law " which the Lord had commanded by Moses," with respect to the ordinance concerning dwelling in booths, during the feast of tabernacles. This ordinance is found only in Leviticus.^f The same proof arises from what is said concerning " the wood-offering."^g

There is every reason to suppose that the book of the law, found in the temple during the reign of Josiah, was that very book

^a 2 Cor. iii. 15. ^b Gal. iv. 21, &c. ^c Ezra vii. 6. ^d Exod. xxxiii. 16. ; Ezra ix. 1. comp. ; Neh. x. 35, 36 ; Exod. xxiii. 13. ; xiii. 13. comp.
^e Ezra vi. 18. ^f Neh. viii. 14. Lev. xxiii. 42, 43. comp. ^g Neh. x. 34. ; Lev. vi. 12. comp.

which Moses had laid up before the ark. As it is said, that "Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of the LORD, by Moses,"^a it has been urged that the original phrase signifies that it was in the hand-writing of Moses. The language of Josephus has been understood as denoting that this was the received opinion among the Jews.^b From his language, however, it certainly appears, that, according to the general opinion, this copy of the law contained the different books of the Pentateuch. For Josephus says, that "the high-priest discovered the sacred books of Moses."^c With respect to the sacrificial service enjoined by Josiah, it is said, "They removed the burnt-offerings, that they might give according to the divisions of the families of the people, to offer unto the LORD; as it is written in the book of Moses."^d The ordinances referred to are in Leviticus.^e In the account of the reformation under Hezekiah, there is a reference to what is contained in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, under the general designation of what "is written in the law of the LORD."^f Jehoiada "appointed the offices of the house of the LORD, by the hand of the priests the Levites, whom David had distributed in the house of the LORD, to offer the burnt-offerings of the LORD, as it is written in the law of Moses."^g Not only in the days of Jehoiada, but in those of David, were the different books of the Pentateuch generally designed the "law of Moses." For the ordinances here referred to are recorded in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers.^h Elsewhere we are informed, that David "left Zadok the priest and his brethren, before the tabernacle of the LORD, to offer burnt-offerings unto the LORD, upon the altar of the burnt-offering continually, morning and evening, and to do according to all that is written in the law of the LORD, which he commanded Israel."ⁱ But the institutions with respect to the morning and evening sacrifices, are to be found in Exodus^k and Numbers,^l but not in Deuteronomy. Now, there can be no reasonable doubt that this expression, "written in the law of the LORD," has the same meaning with that of David, when he speaks of "the charge of the LORD,—as it is written in the law of Moses."^m

In the days of Joshua, this designation, "the book of the law of Moses," was used with the same extent as in succeeding ages. For it is said, that "he read all the words of the law; the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law of Moses." Nay, it is added, "There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel."ⁿ This plainly implies,

^a 2 Chr. xxxiv. 14.

^b Spanheim Hist. Vet. Test. p. 262.

^c *Τας ἱερας βιβλους τας Μωυσεως.* Antiq. Lib. x. c. 5.

^d 2 Chr. xxxv. 12. ^e Chap. iii. 4, 10. ^f 2 Chr. xxxi. 2, 3; Exod. xxix. 38; Lev. xxiii. 2; Numb. viii. 19. comp. ^g 2 Chr. xxiii. 18; 1 Chr. xxiv. xxv. xxvi.

^h Exod. xxviii. 1; Lev. x. 1; Numb. xxvii. 2.

ⁱ 1 Chr. xvi. 37—40. ^k Chap. xxix. 38. ^l Chap. xxviii. 3, 4.

^m 1 Kings ii. 3. ⁿ Josh. viii. 31, 34, 35.

that Moses had committed to writing every thing concerning the law ; and that all this was contained in what was called " the book " of the law of Moses." So fully were all the Israelites convinced of the inspiration of Moses as a writer, that the same book was also called, " the book of the law of God ;"^a these expressions being used as synonymous.

We have seen that the apostle Paul includes the book of Genesis in *the law*. But as this book is almost wholly historical, it could not be expected that there should be so many references to it as to the rest of the Pentateuch. It has, however, been formerly shown, that the great events recorded in it may be viewed as the very foundations of that peculiar dispensation given to the Israelites. I may add, that so close is the connexion between the conclusion of Genesis and the beginning of Exodus, that it cannot reasonably be supposed that they were written by different hands. The history in the beginning of Exodus evidently proceeds on the ground of what had been previously written concerning the departure of the Israelites into Egypt, concerning Joseph and Pharaoh.^b Nothing could be imagined more strange and abrupt than the beginning of this book, if it was not a continuation of the history recorded in Genesis.

The force of this reasoning cannot be consistently rejected by any who believe divine revelation. For they must certainly acknowledge, that, according to the testimony of the Spirit in a variety of passages, the different books of the Pentateuch are ascribed to Moses as the inspired penman. But as little can it be fairly rejected by infidels. For the many books of Scripture above quoted, although not acknowledged as inspired writings, must necessarily be admitted as expressing the general belief of the Jewish nation in the different periods in which they were written. This general belief has been traced up from our own time to that of the settlement of Israel in Canaan. It has been formerly shown, that this nation, in no period of their existence, could have been induced to receive these books as true, had they not been persuaded of their truth ; and that they would never have been persuaded of their truth, had they not been actually true. The same reasoning applies to the subject immediately in hand. When the Israelites first received these books, they must have been no less persuaded that they were written by Moses, than that they gave a just account of their law, and of the wonderful events respecting their nation. For if this universal persuasion, that the Pentateuch was written by Moses, has run through all their generations ; it is just as easy to conceive that they should have been imposed on as to the books themselves, as that they should have been deceived with respect to the writer.

It is conceivable, that the Israelites might have received the

^a Josh. xxiv. 26.

^b Exod. i.—viii.

peculiar institutions of the law, and acknowledged the truth of those miraculous events which were honourable to themselves as a nation, although they had entertained some doubts as to the inspiration of the writer. But they would in all probability have rejected the books as laid, especially as they contain the most particular accounts of their own rebellions, and of the most severe judgments inflicted on them immediately by the hand of God ; had they not been fully convinced that Moses was not only employed by God as the instrument of giving the law, but that he was also inspired as an amanuensis. Such has still been their veneration for the law, that it is not credible that they would have allowed any posterior writer to reduce it into another form than that in which they had received it from Moses. Had Moses left them, in his own hand writing, only the greatest part of Deuteronomy, the short account of their journeys, and of their victory over Amalek, with the song which he composed before his death, they would not have permitted any later writer to alter these precious memorials at his pleasure.

III. The book of the law of Moses must have been imperfect, had he written only the principal part of Deuteronomy, or that which contains the repetition of the law. For it has been seen, that various precepts are recorded in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, which are not repeated in Deuteronomy. Let it be supposed, that some other person or persons had been employed, by divine authority, for collecting and recording these other precepts. In this case, it might have been said, that "Moses made an end of writing ;" but it could not have been truly said, that he "made an end of writing the words of this law" "in a book, *until they were finished.*"^a For, according to this supposition, Moses had neglected to record many important ordinances. He had finished his book ; but still the law was incomplete.

IV. The prophecies contained in these books, while they prove their divine inspiration, also increase the evidence of their being written by Moses. The truth of these prophecies undeniably appears from their accomplishment. "The seed of the woman" hath bruised the head of the serpent, by destroying the kingdom of Satan.^b The prophecies of Noah concerning the subduction of the Canaanites, and the union of the posterity of Japhet to that of Shem, in the worship of the true God, have been remarkably fulfilled.^c The truth of the oracle delivered to Rebekah concerning Jacob and Esau, has signally appeared in the subjection of the Edomites to the Israelites.^d The Gentiles have been gathered to that Shiloh who was to spring from Judah.^e Not to mention the predictions of Balaam recorded in the Pentateuch, have we not in our own day unquestionable evidence of the completion of

^a Deut. xxxi. 24.

^b Gen. iii. 15.

^c Gen. ix 25—27.

^d Gen. xxv. 23.

^e Gen. xlix. 10.

the prophecies concerning the Ishmaelites and Jews? The character of Ishmael is evidently written in that of those Arabian tribes which are known to be his posterity. Their "hand is "against every man, and every man's hand against them." Yet they have still "dwelt in the presence of their brethren.^a The most powerful nations have in vain attempted to subdue them. The Jews are standing witnesses of the truth of those predictions delivered by Moses. Themselves acknowledge their completion.^b They are so literally fulfilled, that the incredulity, which can ascribe such predictions to mere conjecture, supposes one miracle in order to avoid another.

That Moses wrote prophecies, as well as precepts and histories, appears from his recording that prophetic song which we have in Deuteronomy. But his prophecies are not confined to this book. We have some very remarkable ones in the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus. Those which were delivered before his time, were received by the Israelites as authentic, on the faith of Moses as an inspired writer. Hence it became customary with them to ascribe to him all the prophecies recorded in the Pentateuch. Our Lord expresses the general sense of the nation, as to all the prophecies contained in these books respecting the Messiah, when he says concerning Moses, "He wrote of me."^c Paul also declares the universal faith of his nation, when he affirms in the presence of Agrippa, who was a Jew, that he "said none "other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say "should come; that Christ should suffer, and that he should be "the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light to "the Gentiles."^d Now, if Moses wrote no other prophecy concerning Christ than what is recorded in the eighteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, he said *none* of these things which Paul ascribes to him. For in that prophecy, Moses says nothing of the sufferings of Christ, of his resurrection, or of the conversion of the Gentiles. The enemies of Paul could easily have contradicted his assertion, had they not, as well as he, attributed to Moses those prophecies in Genesis, which foretel the bruising of the Messiah's heel, and the consequent gathering of the people to him.

V. The Samaritans have not only still acknowledged the divinity of the first five books of the Bible, but still acknowledged them as the writings of Moses. It is well known that they have the whole Pentateuch in the Samaritan character; and that this differs very little from the Hebrew copies. Some suppose that this has been preserved among them since the time of the captivity of the ten tribes.^e Others think it more probable, that they received it from Manasseh, the brother of Jaddus, who being high-priest, apostatized to the Samaritans, because he would not

^a Gen. xvi. 12.

^b Deut. xxviii. xxix. xxx.

^c John v. 46.

^d Acts xxvi. 22, 23.

^e Spanheim, Hist. Vet. Test. p. 430, 431.

quit his wife, who was daughter of Sanballat, governor of Samaria.^a According to some writers, this Manasseh was that son-in-law of Sanballat, whom Nehemiah chased from the priesthood :^b although his name be not mentioned. The learned Prideaux is of this opinion, and supposes that Josephus is chargeable with anachronism, when he relates that this high-priest lived during the reign of Darius Codomanus.^c

It is at any rate admitted, that the Samaritan Pentateuch is very ancient. Considering the inveterate enmity between the Jews and Samaritans, it is not probable that the former would have furnished the latter with a copy of the law. Nor is it credible, that the Samaritans would have acknowledged the Pentateuch as written by Moses, unless they had been fully convinced that this was the truth ; especially as it is generally believed that they received no other part of the Old Testament Scriptures.

VI. The arguments already brought, so clearly shew, that the books ascribed to Moses were really written by him, that no further evidence is necessary. Yet it may not be superfluous to observe, that so general was this persuasion, that the heathen were no strangers to it.

Josephus, the Jewish historian, has demonstrated, from the concessions of heathen writers, that the laws of Moses were penned long before those of any Gentile nation. He justly observes, that “in ancient times the name of *law* was unheard of, and that “even Homer wanted a word by which to express it.^d Such was the fame of Moses, that Chalcidius, a celebrated Platonic philosopher, calls him *the prophet* ; and Numenius, another philosopher of the same school, *the wisest of men*.^e Artapanus makes Moses to be the Mercury of the Greeks, who was called Thoyth or Theut by the Egyptians. “Moses,” he says, “the child of a Jewess, but adopted by the daughter of Palmanothes, king of Egypt, delivered many things extremely useful to the human race. On this account he not only conciliated the affection of the people, but from the priests easily acquired honour equal to what is given to the gods, so that they called him *Hermes*, that is, *Mercury* or the *Interpreter*, on account of his interpretation of sacred letters.”^f We learn from Herodotus, that “those Phenicians, who accompanied Cadmus,—as they introduced many doctrines, also brought letters with them into Greece, which,” says he, “as appears to me, were formerly unknown to the Greeks.”^g This indeed is the general language of antiquity. With this testimony let us compare that of Eupolemus.

^a Joseph. Antiq. lib. xi. cap. 7.

^b Neh. xiii. 28.

^c Connect. vol. i. p. 327, edit. 1720 : Calmet's Dict. v. Manasseh.

^d Cont. Apion. lib. ii.

^e Vid. Deyling, Obs. Sac. Par. i. p. 351.

^f Δία τὴν τῶν ἱερῶν γραμμάτων ἐρμηνείαν. Ap. Euseb. Præpar. lib. ix. cap. 27. Vid. Wilsii Ægyptiac. lib. iii. cap. 2.

^g In Terpsichore.

He says, that "Moses was the first wise man, and that he first taught the Jews letters; that the Phenicians received these from the Jews, and the Greeks from the Phenicians."^a

The most credible Greek writers acknowledge, that Moses was the first legislator. Thus Diodorus Siculus; "According to that ancient institution of life, which took place in Egypt under the gods and heroes in those fabulous times, it is related, that the first who persuaded the people to use written laws, and to live according to these, was Moses; a man celebrated for the greatness of his soul, and for the regularity of his life."^b I shall only further observe, that it seems to have been generally believed among the heathen, that the histories, as well as the laws, contained in the Pentateuch, were written by Moses. Alexander Polyhistor, so denominated because of his vast erudition, evidently refers to the book of Genesis, when he says, "Cleodemus, the prophet, also called Malchas, in his book concerning the Jews, relates the same things as Moses their legislator, that many sons were born to Abraham by Keturah, three of whom were named Aser, Assur and Afra,"^c &c.

There never was a more inveterate enemy of Christianity than Porphyry the philosopher. Yet, after having loaded Moses and the prophets with reproaches, he inadvertently leaves a testimony to the truth of the Holy Scriptures. Speaking of Sanchoniatho, the Phenician writer, he says, that he manifests the strictest regard to truth in the history which he gives of the Jews, as having received the Commentaries on this subject from Jerombaal, priest of the God *Jeuo*. This history he dedicated to Abelbal, king of Berytus, which was approved both by him, and by others, whom he had used as his advisers in investigating the truth. These persons, he further says, lived before the time of the Trojan war, and were nearly of the same age with Moses; as appears from the succession of the Phenician kings. He adds, that Sanchoniatho flourished in the time of Semiramis. Eusebius has observed, that, even supposing that Moses had not lived before Sanchoniatho, this testimony gives him very high antiquity; for Semiramis lived eight hundred years before the Trojan war.^d It has been already observed, that the Jerombaal here referred to, is generally supposed to be Gideon, who was called Jerubbaal; *e* as *Jeuo*, or *Jao*, is just the name *Jehovah*, as it would be written by a Greek.^f Porphyry, finding it an unquestionable fact, that this Jerombaal supplied Sanchoniatho with Commentaries concerning the Jews, it proves, that, even in this early period, they

^a Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i. p. 253. Vid. Owen. Theolog. lib. iv. cap. 3. digr. 1. Eusebius also quotes Eupolemus, Præp. lib. ix. c. 50.

^b Lib. i. Vid. Owen. Theolog. lib. iii. cap. 3. digr. 3.

^c Ap. Joseph. Antiq. lib. i. cap. 16. et Euseb. Præp. lib. ix. cap. 20. Grot. de Verit. lib. i. § 16.

^d Eus. Præp. lib. x. c. 9.

^e Jud. vii. 1.

^f Eusebius writes it *Ieuw*, and Theodoret *Iaw*. Quæst. 15. in Ex.

were not only acquainted with writing, but had a sacred history of their nation. It does not indeed amount to a proof, but it affords a very strong presumption, that this history was written by Moses ; because he is mentioned in immediate connexion, and evidently as preceding the Phenician historian. From the notice taken of Moses, in connexion with these commentaries, it appears extremely probable, that these had been ascribed to him by San- choniatho.

Before leaving this subject, we may advert to some of the Ob- jections that have been made to the sentiment affirmed in the preceding part of this Dissertation.

It has been urged, as of no inconsiderable weight, that " the whole of these books is in the third person ;" that " it is always, " *The Lord said unto Moses, or Moses said unto the Lord ;*" and that " this is the style and manner that historians use in speaking " of the persons whose lives and actions they are writing."^a It has been justly observed in reply, that Xenophon, and Cæsar, and Josephus, use this manner of writing, when they relate those very transactions in which they were themselves principal agents or parties. The reasoning is thus continued : " It may be said, that " a man may speak of himself in the third person ; and therefore " it may be supposed that Moses did : but supposition proves " nothing."^b Fact, however, proves a great deal. The writer of the Pentateuch evidently introduces Moses as " speaking of him- " self in the third person." In this manner is the prophetic benediction of Israel recorded : " And this is the blessing where- " with Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before " his death. And he," that is Moses, " said, The Lord came " from Sanai, and rose up from Scir unto them : he shined " forth from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of " saints : from his right-hand went a fiery law for them. Yea, " he loved the people ; all his saints are in thy hand : and they " sat down at thy feet ; every one shall receive of thy words. " Moses commanded us a law ; even the inheritance of the con- " gregation of Jacob. And he was king in Jeshurun, when the " heads of the people and tribes of Israel were gathered together. " Let Reuben live, and not die," &c.^c Unless we would do the greatest violence to language, we must necessarily suppose, that all that follows the introduction, is given as contained in the address of Moses to the people.

As we are sure that this manner of speaking was very ancient, no good reason can be given why it should not be also used in writing. Jacob, in his blessing, speaks sometimes in the first, and sometimes in the third person.^d The same mode of expres- sion is attributed to Balaam : " Balaam lift up his eyes,—and he " took up his parable and said, Balaam, the son of Beor, hath said,

^a Age of Reason, Part II. p. 5.

^b Ibid.

^c Deut. xxxiii. 1—6.

^d Gen. xlix. 2, 3, 4, 24, 25.

“and the man whose eyes are open hath said,”^a &c. Will any one doubt, whether Matthew and John wrote the gospels ascribed to them, merely because they speak of themselves in the third person?

As it is said, Numb. xii. 3. “The man Moses was very meek “above all the men which were on the face of the earth,” it has been inferred, either that Moses was not the writer, or that he is without credit because of this self-commendation. This objection has been so well answered already, that scarcely any thing further is necessary.^b Only it may be observed, that, in one point of view, it is merely a begging of the question. For, as all the true friends of revelation maintain, not only that Moses was the writer, but that he was the *inspired* writer, of the Pentateuch; according to their hypothesis, he was directed by the Spirit of God in all that he wrote. This apparent self-praise is no more an objection to the credibility of the writer, than his unexampled impartiality in recording his own errors. Both must be equally ascribed to superior impulse. If that self-love which is natural to all men, and which prompts the generality of writers to draw a veil over their faults, did not hinder Moses from recording his own obstinacy, unbelief,^c sinful wrath, and judicial exclusion from the land of promise;^d it is unnatural to suppose, that he was under the influence of this principle when expressing the singular meekness of his temper; especially as he must have viewed it as a gift of God, qualifying him for his arduous work, and therefore as no proper ground of boasting. But it is common with the adversaries of divine revelation, to separate one part of its evidence from the other, although essentially connected.*

It has been urged as a very important objection, that the name of *Dan* is found in Gen. xiv. 14.; whereas the town, formerly designed *Laish*, was not called *Dan* till about the time of Samson, as appears from Judg. xviii. 27, 28. But the evidence that the Pen-

^a Numb. xxiv. 2—5.

^b See Watson's Apol. Let. 2. Scott's Vindication, B. i. c. 1.

^c Exod. iii. 11.; iv. 1, 10, 13. ^d Numb. xx. 10—12.

* An objection of this kind comes with very ill grace from one, who is so careful to inform mankind of his great consequence, both as a political and as a theological writer, as appears from the following passages: “I wrote *Common Sense* the latter end of the year 1775, and published it the first of January 1776. INDEPENDENCE,” that of America, “was DECLARED the 4th of July following.”†—“I was seized with a fever.—It was then that I remembered with renewed satisfaction, and congratulated myself most sincerely, on having written the former part of the *Age of Reason*.—I have produced a work, that no Bible believer, though writing at his ease, and with a library of church books about him, can refute.”‡ Let the reader judge, whether this language, or that of Moses, discovers “one of the most vain and arrogant of coxcombs;” especially if it be at the same time considered, that he who has been at such pains to record his own excellencies, and *usefulness* to society, has not given an equal evidence of his credibility, by recording his errors.

† *Age of Reason*, Part I. p. 35.

‡ Pref. to Part II.

tateuch was written by Moses, would not be in the least degree weakened, by the supposition that it had been originally *Laish*, and that after this name came to be little known, that of *Dan* had been written on the margin, and afterwards inserted by some transcriber into the text. There is no necessity, however, even for this supposition. The enemies of revelation cannot prove, that there was not a place or rivulet of the name of *Dan* in the days of Abraham. The probability is, that there was; as the name seems to be retained in that of *Jordan*; which, according to ancient writers, signifies *the river of Dan*. Now, there can be no doubt, that, in the time of Moses, this river was called *Jordan*. From the silence of other parts of Scripture with respect to this *Dan*, it can be no more inferred that it did not exist, than that there was no such place as *Hobah*, mentioned in the next verse, because the name occurs no where else in Scripture.

In Gen. xxxvi. 31. it is said, "These are the kings that reigned in Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel." The same passage is found in 1 Chron. i. 43. Hence it has been inferred, "that this part of Genesis is taken from Chronicles, and that Genesis is not so old as Chronicles."^a

If we compare the two passages, it will appear far more natural to conclude, that the genealogy in Genesis was first written, and that the other is an abridgment of it. For the former is more than double the size of the latter. It has been generally supposed, that the words contained in Gen. xxxvi. 31. have been inserted into the text by Ezra, or some other writer, after the Israelites were accustomed to monarchical government: and the supposition can effect neither the authenticity nor the inspiration of the book. Such a supposition, however, is quite unnecessary. It was in the highest degree consistent with the design of the inspired writer to give a particular account of the Edomites. He had already recorded the prophecy delivered to Rebekah, that "the one people should be stronger than the other, and that the elder should serve the younger."^b That the completion of this prophecy might eventually appear the more remarkable, he shews, that the Edomites formed a considerable nation, under a regular government, while the Israelites, so far from having any rulers of their own race, were in a state of slavery in Egypt. The expression, *before there reigned any king over the children of Israel*, may merely signify, before they had any regular government of their own. For the word rendered *king*, is sometimes used to denote a judge or governor. Thus, in the history of the Judges, it is said, "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes."^c It is evident, that the term is here used to denote a *judge*. For there had never been a king in Israel in any other sense. The reason added

^a Age of Reason, Part II. p. 10, 11.

^b Gen. xxv. 23.

^c Judg. xvii. 6.

shews incontestably, that nothing more is intended, than that they had no chief ruler of any kind. For were it meant, that the anarchy at this time prevailing was merely the consequence of the want of monarchical government, it must follow, that the same anarchy prevailed during all the time of the government of the Judges ; for there was still the same reason for it.^a In like manner, Moses calls himself " king in Jeshurun." ^b

There is another way in which this language may be satisfactorily accounted for. The writer had already said, as we learn from the preceding chapter, that God had declared to Jacob, as he had also done to Abraham ; " Kings shall come out of thy loins." ^c But, by giving a particular account of the priority of the descendants of Esau as to temporal dignity, he in effect shews the Israelites how God was pleased to try their faith in his promise.

From the number of governors mentioned in this chapter, it cannot justly be inferred, that their succession extended to a much later period than that in which Moses is said to have wrote. For, according to the judgment of some learned writers, a considerable number of these rulers preceded Esau. The Horites, whose dukes are here named, existed as a nation in the time of Abraham.^d There is no evidence, that the kings mentioned after them had any affinity to Esau. It has been supposed, that the Horites were first governed by different independent chiefs, called *dukes*, but that being easily conquered, while in this divided state, by Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, they united under a monarchical government : and that, when Esau's posterity increased, this form of government was changed, and the former restored.^e It would appear, however, that for a considerable time at least, the country was divided into two districts ; that the one was called " the land of Seir," and that the other received the name of Edom, after being possessed by the posterity of Esau. The chiefs of the Horite race were sovereigns of Seir ; ^f and it seems probable, that the kingly government subsisted at the same time in the country afterwards called Edom.^g But though it were possible to prove, that all these kings were really descendants of Esau, it would not follow, that they did not all reign before the time of Moses. They are only eight in number, and it was not till two hundred and thirty-six years after the death of Isaac, that Moses entered on the work of judging Israel. As to the dukes of the family of Esau, it is evident that we have only two descents of them. In the first, there were fourteen, each governing his own territory at the same time : and eleven in the second. I shall only further observe, that, had Genesis been written after Chronicles, the writer, as a Jew, would undoubtedly have paid as

^a See also Judg. xviii. 1. ; xix. 1. ; xxi. 25. ^b Deut. xxxiii. 5.

^c Gen. xvii. 6. ; xxxv. 11. ^d Gen. xiv. 6.

^e Univ. Hist. vol. ii. p. 170. ^f Gen. xxxvi. 29, 30.

^g Ver. 30, 31. comp.

great a compliment to his own nation as to the Edomites ; and would therefore have carried down the genealogy of the family of Jacob, as far as he did that of the family of Esau.

An argument that Moses did not write the Pentateuch, has been derived from these words : " And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited : they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan."^a Some learned Christian writers have admitted, that this passage could not have been written by Moses, but must have been inserted afterwards.^b But there is nothing here that Moses could not say with propriety. It was incumbent on him as a faithful historian, not only to relate the miraculous sustentation of Israel, but to tell how long it had continued to his certain knowledge. Before he finished his writing, they had been forty years in the wilderness.^c All this time had they been fed with manna. So far from thinking it unnatural that Moses should refer to the duration of the miracle, it would have been surprising indeed had he mentioned the miracle in any other way. For undoubtedly its duration afforded far more unquestionable evidence of its reality, than if such a circumstance had taken place only once or twice. When it is said that this continued " until they came to a land inhabited," it does not follow that the writer meant to say that it immediately ceased. The preposition *until* is often used in a very different sense, both by sacred and by profane writers. It is not the design of the passage indeed to specify the precise time that the manna continued with the Israelites ; but to shew that God had miraculously fed them forty years, while they had no ordinary means of support. The contrast is stated not properly between Canaan and that whole country, whether desert or cultivated, which lay between Egypt and it ; but between *a land inhabited*, where food might have been procured, and *the wilderness*, where they could have found none. This appears undeniably from the connexion between the 35th and 32d verses : " Moses said, This is the thing which the LORD commandeth, Fill an *omer* of it, to be kept for your generations, that they may see the bread wherewith *I have fed you in the wilderness*, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt.—" And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, *until they came to a land inhabited.*" Then the writer returns to illustrate what he had said in verse 32, concerning the quantity to be laid up : " Now an *omer* is the tenth part of an ephah," verse 36.

To me the passage carries internal evidence of having been written before the Israelites entered Canaan. It seems to be guarded, as if the historian had meant that it should be thus understood. Had it been written after the Israelites were settled in the land of promise, it would most probably have been said, " They did eat manna until they came *into the land* of Canaan."

^a Exod. xvi. 35.

^b Wilsii Miscell. vol. i. lib. i. c. xiv. sect. 44.

^c Deut. ii. 7.; viii. 2, 4.

But instead of this it is, "until they came *unto the borders of the* land of Canaan." A late writer has tried to give the words an unfair turn, when he says, that "Moses—died in the wilderness, "and never came *upon* the borders of the land of Canaan."^a But he certainly came *unto* these borders. For before he finished his writing, he was "in the plains of Moab, by Jordan, near Jericho."^b Before his death, he uses similar language in regard to this miraculous support, with that in the verse under consideration. He addresses the Israelites as having now finished their peregrinations in the wilderness, and as being come to a land inhabited. He speaks as if the miraculous supply of the manna had been at an end, because he knew it was to cease in a very short time :* "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness ;—and he fed thee with manna." And again, "Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness ;—who fed thee in the wilderness with manna."^c

The same writer has attempted to shew, that such language could not be applicable to the Israelites during the life of Moses, by comparing it with that in Josh. v. 12. "And the manna ceased on the morrow, after they had eaten of the old corn of the land, neither had the children of Israel manna any more, but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." But the language is very different. It is said expressly that the manna *ceased*. Here we do not read merely of a *land inhabited*, but of *the land of Canaan*. The phraseology supposes, that the people were come, not unto the borders of the land of Canaan, but to this land itself. From the other passage, there is no reason to conclude, that the writer meant to insinuate, that the Israelites had no more manna ; for he mentions no substitute. But here we are informed that they made use of *corn* instead of it.

Two objections have been founded on what is said, Deut. iii. 11. "For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants ; behold, his bed-stead was a bed-stead of iron ; is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon ? nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man." The first objection is, that it gives countenance to the fabulous notions about giants."^d This objection has been so well answered already,^e that I shall not spend time on it. I shall only observe, that the existence of individuals of an extraordinary size, is a fact attested by profane as well as by sacred history.^f

The other objection is, that "it could not be Moses that said

^a Age of Reason, Part II. p. 13. ^b Numb. xxxiii. 50.

* It did actually cease in the course of a few weeks at farthest : as appears from Deut. i. 3. and Josh. v. 12. compared.

^c Deut. viii. 3, 15, 16.

^d Age of Reason, Part II. p. 13.

^e See Bishop Watson's Apology, Let. 3.

^f Vid. Gro. de Verit. lib. i. sect. 16. Bocharti Phaleg, lib. i. cap. 13.

"this, because Moses could know nothing about Rabbah, nor of what was in it. "Rabbah," it is added, "was not a city belonging to this giant king, nor was it one of the cities that Moses took. The knowledge, therefore, that this bed was at Rabbah, and of the particulars of its dimensions, must be referred to the time when Rabbah was taken, and this was not till four hundred years after the death of Moses; for which see 2 Sam. xii. 26."^a This objection, like many others, shews how extremely anxious the enemies of revelation are to grasp at every twig they can lay hold of, and how much at a loss for argument. It discovers indeed, either the grossest ignorance of the subject, or the greatest presumption. Rabbah did not belong to Og, nor was it one of the cities which Moses took. Does it therefore follow, that "he could know nothing about it?" By this kind of reasoning, one who had never read the history would be apt to conclude, that Rabbah was at the distance of some hundreds of miles from the scene of the conquests of Moses. But the kingdom of Og was separated from that of Bashan, only by the river Jabbok. Jazer, one of the cities conquered by the Israelites,^b was within a few miles of Rabbah. The inheritance, which *Moses gave* to the tribe of Gad, had for its border "half the land of the children of Ammon."^c Their inheritance, as well as that of Reuben, extended to Jabbok.^d Now, it has been generally admitted, that Rabbah was situated on this river, and that thence one part of the city was called *the city of waters*.^e But this river, it would seem, must have had as wonderful an influence on Moses, as the poets have ascribed to Lethe. If it did not drown the past in oblivion, it prevented any increase of knowledge for the future. Of what took place beyond it, he "could know nothing."

It is no less absurd to suppose that the particulars here recorded could not be known till the time of David. From the history given of the siege of Rabbah, there is every reason to suppose that the city was totally destroyed by him. Surely, then, no man would afterwards write, concerning the bed of Og, "Is it not in Rabbah?" when Rabbah itself had no existence. But although it were certain, that this verse had been written in the time of David, as it would not follow that the whole of the Pentateuch was of as late a date, as little would it weaken the evidence of revelation, in respect to the existence of giants, which is declared in a variety of other places. It would have an effect directly contrary. It would prove, that the extraordinary size of this king was admitted by a neighbouring nation, "four hundred years after the death of Moses;" and that they still preserved his bed as a proof of the fact; unless it can be supposed, that the Ammonites were so friendly to the religion of the Israelites, as to make this bed at some later period, for the express purpose of confirming

^a Age of Reason, Part II. p. 14. ^b Numb. xxxii. 3. ^c Josh. xiii. 25.
^d Deut. iii. 16. ^e 2 Sam. xii 7. See Well's Geogr. O. Test.
 vol. ii. p. 176. Hieronym. Loc. Hebraic, v. Jabosh.

their sacred history. Let me add ; was this circumstance reckoned worthy of so much attention in the days of David, and was it impossible that it should come to the *knowledge* of Moses, or attract any attention in his time ?

The objection derived from the pretended cruelty of Moses, has been so fully answered by others, that I cannot pretend to offer any thing new on the subject.^a

Some have thought that Moses, before going up to Mount Pisgah, was employed by the Spirit of God to write the account of his own death.^b This idea will excite the laugh of an infidel ; but it will not appear incredible to one who believes the truth of inspiration. As, however, it is nowise necessary to the truth of revelation, that every word of a book should have been written by the person whose name it bears, this is no where affirmed in Scripture. It was never supposed by any believer, that both the books which bear the name of Samuel were written by him. After the death of any inspired writer, it would seem that his work was continued or concluded by another person, endowed with the same spirit, and that the original name was retained, because the work was only continued. Hence it is most probable, that the last chapter of Deuteronomy was added by Joshua ; especially as it would seem, that, with the exception of the concluding verses, he wrote the whole of that book which bears his name, in that very volume which Moses had delivered to the priests, to be laid up before the ark. For we are informed, that, after Joshua had made a covenant with the people, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem, he *wrote these words in the book of the law of God.*^c

^a See Bp. Watson's Apology, Let. 3. Scott's Vindication, p: 15—22.

^b Pfeifferi Difficil. Script. Loc. Cent. 2. loc. 44.

^c Josh. xxiv. 26.

THE
USE OF SACRED HISTORY.

PART I.

MANKIND have universally acknowledged the advantages arising from history. Hence, even those nations that have been unacquainted with writing, have preserved their history in traditionary songs, or in emblematical figures. When properly managed, it contains a faithful memorial of both the good and the evil actions of men ; and endeavours, as far as possible, to discover the springs of these actions. Thus it operates, both as a spur to the imitation of what is laudable, and as a beacon to deter from what is wrong. It also records the more important works of the Supreme Cause, whether in the world of nature, of providence, or of grace. History gives a present existence to the past, and in some measure makes up for the brevity of human life, by calling in the experience of former ages. But all the advantages that human history can boast, are possessed in a far superior degree by that which has the stamp of inspiration. It also possesses others, which are entirely its own. -

There is, perhaps, no part of Sacred Scripture so little attended to, or so little valued, by the generality of readers, as the historical. Except what immediately respects the life and death of our Saviour, or the propagation of the gospel by his first ministers ; they consider themselves as very little interested in a narration of facts which happened so many years ago. They seem to think that the history of ancient heathen nations, recorded in Scripture, was merely intended for the use of the Jews, who were their neighbours ; and that as these nations are in general extinct, it can be of little or no advantage to Christians.

But they have not duly considered that, as "*all scripture* is given by inspiration of God," it is *all profitable*. To many, even the history of the Jews seems especially meant for the use of that nation. Those, however, who entertain this sentiment, have not learned, that not only the prophets did "not minister unto themselves, but unto us the things which are now reported"^a in the gospel; but that the sacred historians were employed principally for this end. A great part of the Holy Bible is lost to those who know not that "all these things," which are recorded immediately in relation to the posterity of Jacob, "happened unto them for ensamples," and that "they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."^b

So little attention being given to this branch of revelation, notwithstanding its great utility, it is the more necessary that we should consider it at large. We shall, first, take a more general view of the use of Sacred History. We may, secondly, advert to some of its peculiar beauties. The special advantages arising from this species of writing, may be next considered. We shall then inquire into the design of the history of God's ancient people in particular: and afterwards endeavour to show, from a variety of evidence, that the Sacred History, in its general tenor, is meant to illustrate, confirm, and enforce the great doctrines of revelation.

SECTION I.

A General View of the Use of Sacred History.

WE are, FIRST, to attend to the use of Sacred History in general. This is so various, that we mean only to make a few remarks, as introductory to what is principally in view.

1. The Holy Scripture contains a striking account of the *origin of all things*. It was worthy of divine wisdom, that the book which was to contain the annals of the world for so many ages, should commence with a declaration of its origin; that this volume, which carries us forward to the end of time, should carry us back to its beginning; that the important history of the new creation should be prefaced by an account of the old. Man learns, indeed, from the light of nature, that the world must have had a beginning. These very works which proclaim "the eternal power and godhead" of the First Cause, plainly intimate the temporal nature of their own existence. But it was the will of God, that man should enjoy a more clear and express testimony; that he should not merely know by reason, but "understand

^a 1 Pet. i. 12.

^b 1 Cor. x. 11.

"through faith, that the worlds were framed." For it is not enough that we believe some things on rational, and others on scriptural grounds. It is the pleasure of the Most High, that all that we believe concerning him, or his works, although discernible by the light of nature, should rest directly on his own testimony. He is also pleased to inform us of the manner in which he created : "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God ;" and so framed, "that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.^a Here are two things which can be known only by faith ; first, that the worlds were framed by God's word of command ; and, secondly, that they were not created of pre-existent matter, but of nothing. Faith learns the former, from the language of the inspired historian ; "God *said*, Let there be light ; and there was light,"^b &c. It learns the latter, from the general strain of the history of creation. For it is declared ; "In the beginning God created the heaven, and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void."^c If God created both heaven and earth "in the beginning ;" there was no material principle previously existing. That expression, "And the earth was without form, and void," does not declare what was the state of the earth before creation, but what was its state immediately after its first formation, before God reduced every thing to order and beauty, by that regular process which the historian proceeds to declare.

Nothing can give us a more exalted idea of divine power, than the history of the creation. We cannot conceive any human emblem of the majesty of God so proper as that which is here employed. "He spake, and it was done : he commanded, and it stood fast."^d Every thing in this description corresponds to the character of the glorious architect. We perceive the most perfect order in the whole. An existence is first given to matter itself. Then, at his almighty word, our earth rises out of chaos. But as its beauty must have been otherwise lost, as it must have been otherwise a gloomy prison, unfit for the reception of an intelligent creature, the light is created. This earth would still have been an unfit abode for man, had not an atmosphere been formed. Therefore God made that firmament or great expanse, part of which is employed for receiving our atmosphere, which contains the air that we breathe.^e Notwithstanding the creation of our atmosphere, the earth would still have been uninhabitable, had it not been separated from the great body of water. Therefore, "the waters were gathered together into one place, and the dry land appeared."^f The earth itself was now completely formed ; but it had no capacity of supporting any inhabitants. It was still unproductive. Therefore "God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed," &c.^g That the

^a Heb. xi. 3.^b Gen. i. 3.^c Gen. i. 1, 2.^d Psal. xxxiii. 9.^e Gen. i. 6, 7.^f Ver. 9.^g Ver. 11, 12.

light might be regular and permanent, it was necessary that it should be collected into a common source. This could not be done with propriety, till after the formation of the firmament. But the firmament being formed, God made the great lights. He made the stars also.^a The fruitfulness of the earth would have been lost, had it not been abundantly stocked with inhabitants. Therefore, both the waters and the earth are made "to bring forth abundantly."^b Many have imagined, that the earth, under the genial influence of the sun, hath of itself produced those plants and animals which it bears. But God guards his church against this delusion. We find that the earth was barren, till fructified by his word of power. Till then, it had neither grass, nor herb, nor tree, nor seed:^c and these are produced, before the sun is created. Both earth and water are without inhabitants, till God commands them to *bring forth*.^d Thus, he teaches us, that every thing proceeds immediately from his hand. At length God gives being to his greatest and best work in this lower world, after it was so completely prepared for his reception. "God said, 'Let us make man.'^e How puerile and absurd are all the heathenish fictions concerning the work of creation, compared with this description! Justly may we adopt the language of the Psalmist; "O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches."^f Well may we admire this wisdom, as it appeared not only in the order observed, but in the time employed in creation. God could as easily have created all things in one day, in one moment, as in six days. But he would shew that "he does not act by necessity, or by a blind impetuosity, as some philosophers have imagined. He who acts by understanding, and with a sovereign liberty, by making the world at different times, demonstrates that he is master of his matter, of his action, and of his whole undertaking; and that he has in acting, no other rule than his own will, ever infallibly right in itself."^g

11. We have a particular account of the *original state* of man. Reason assures us, that this must have been very different from his present situation. But we have a more certain testimony, in the scriptural history of the creation. In this we are informed, that God created man in his own image, after his likeness. Their minds must be gross indeed, who can suppose that this language has any relation to the fashion of man's body. Nothing can be more evident than that it exclusively respects the formation of his soul. This was created in the image of God, as it was created spiritual and immortal. In the spirituality of its nature, as well as in its peculiar frame, as it possesses the powers of understanding and will, it resembles "the Father of Spirits." In its

^a Gen. i. 16.

^b Ver. 20, 24.

^c Ver. 11, 12.

^d Ver. 20, 24.

^e Ver. 26.

^f Psal. civ. 24.

^g Bossuet's Univ. Hist. vol. i. p. 2.

immortality, it exhibits an imperfect similitude of Him, "who only hath immortality." We are informed accordingly, that the soul of man had an origin totally different from that of his body. "The LORD God formed man," or the earthly man, "of the dust of the ground." But he had yet to accomplish the principal part of his work. "He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life;" or the spirit of lives; "and man became a living soul."^a The soul of man is supposed to be called "the spirit of lives," because of its various faculties and operations. The image of God also consisted in man's dominion over the creatures. This is related in the closest connection with what has been already mentioned: "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."^b The dominion given to man, was a feeble resemblance of the authority of his Maker, whose "kingdom ruleth over all."

But although this image antecedently consisted in spirituality and immortality, and consequentially in dominion over the inferior creation, it principally consisted in the moral dispositions of the faculties of the soul, or in what has been commonly called *original righteousness*. In this respect it is said, that "God made man upright."^c This uprightness or rectitude includes knowledge in his understanding, righteousness in his will, and holiness and regularity in his affections. As the new creation is a restoration of that image impressed on the soul of man in the old, the history of the one throws light on that of the other. We are therefore informed, not only that "the new man is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him,"^d but that he is "created in righteousness and true holiness."^e God has been pleased to afford us unquestionable proofs of the residence of all these qualities in the first Adam. He soon put his *knowledge* to the test; and he approved of the evidence of it. For he "brought every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, unto Adam, to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof."^f The *righteousness* of his will appeared by his cordial approbation of the divine ordinance with respect to marriage, as opposed to uncleanness of whatever description. He said, "therefore shall a man—cleave to his wife."^g This was also manifested by his cheerful submission to the will of God, expressed in the positive precept as to not eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.^h Both these no less demonstrated the *holiness* of his affections. As long as he continued in innocence, his soul knew no desire beyond the limits prescribed by the Su-

^a Gen. ii. 7.^c Eccl. vii. 29.^f Gen. ii. 19.^b Gen. i. 26.^d Col. iii. 10.^g Ver. 24.^e Eph. iv. 24.^h Ver. 16, 17.

preme Lawgiver. He had no inclination to gratify his senses at the expense of rebellion against God. The total absence of shame, notwithstanding the nakedness of our first parents, may be also viewed as an evidence of the same purity. "They were both naked, and were not ashamed."^a

xiii. Sacred History accounts, in a satisfactory manner, for the *origin of evil*, both moral and natural. Here also the theories of heathen philosophers were very distant from the truth. The most rational was that of Plato, who supposed that evil proceeded from matter, and that the soul was corrupted by the body. Some pretended Christians give an account of this matter fully as ridiculous. They assert, that the soul of Adam was created, not only without original righteousness, but with a certain corrupt bias leading contrary to duty. The body, they at the same time say, was formed mortal. But their doctrine concerning the soul evidently contains a blasphemous reflection on its Maker. It throws the blame of moral evil on that Being who cannot behold iniquity. And whatever they pretend in regard to death being no calamity, but a blessing, as relieving men from the adversities of life; the common sense, as well as the common feelings of mankind, will still treat their fine-spun theory with derision. Though it were true that death were a blessing rather than a calamity, as relieving men from the evils of life: the difficulty would still recur with all its original force, Whence proceed these evils? Is it consistent with the character of a Being of infinite goodness, or as they say, of pure benevolence, to subject creatures to misery before they have sinned?

The scripture history shews the falsity of the heathenish system, which ascribes the origin of evil to matter. For "God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good."^b It equally demonstrates the falsity of the other. For it exhibits death merely as the penal sanction of the law. It presents us with a system every way more rational than any one that human ingenuity has devised. It informs us, that God created man after his own image, and therefore without any inclination to moral evil; that he left him to the freedom of his own will; that his will being mutable, he fell into sin in consequence of temptation by a being of a superior rank, already fallen; that this being, in order to further his design, disguised himself, by employing one of the brute creatures as his instrument; and that man, having lost the image of God, communicated his own depraved image to his posterity. It is unreasonable to object, that it seems unworthy of God to suspend the happiness of mankind on a circumstance in itself absolutely indifferent. For the will of the Creator is the supreme law; and we cannot conceive that God could give a more fit display of his own dominion, and of man's subjection, than by the intervention of a positive precept.

^a Gen. ii. 25.

^b Gen. i. 31.

iv. It gives a satisfying account of the reason of that universal *change* which is visible on the face of nature. Nothing can be more evident than that this earth appears, in its present state, as a vast ruin. We see every where traces of magnificence. But they are such as Balbec, and Palmyra, and Persepolis, exhibit on a smaller scale. Many parts of the earth are entirely barren : nay, vast regions are absolutely uninhabitable. Every where we find it more willing to produce useless or noxious weeds, than the food that is necessary for the support of its inhabitants. Can it be supposed then, that it continues in that state in which it was formed by a Being of infinite goodness, for the habitation of innocent man ? Reason itself affirms the contrary. It assures us that this lower world is mournfully changed. But reason cannot fully account for this change. Some indeed tell us, that the habitable part of this earth has been gradually elevated from the abysses of the sea, by the force of those subterranean fires which are still burning in its bowels. But this theory has no sufficient support from facts. Its friends find it necessary to fix the existence of a former earth far beyond the æra of fable. Others admit the destructive influence of partial deluges. The Scripture alone gives a satisfactory solution of the difficulty. It informs us, that immediately after the fall, God cursed the earth for man's sake.^a But although the curse was partially felt from the moment of its denunciation, God seems to have suspended the full execution of it, till his justice should be more abundantly vindicated by the universal corruption of man. He accordingly poured it forth, in all its temporal fury, in the universal deluge. Such a deluge, as is described in Sacred History, can alone account for the universal change that is visible in this earth. Vegetable substances, which must have once grown on its surface, are now found deeply buried in its bowels ; and beds of shells, that must have once been the habitations of marine animals, are found on the summits of those mountains which are most elevated above the level of the ocean. These effects could be produced by such a deluge only as "covered all the high hills that were under the whole heaven ;"^b by a deluge of long continuance ; nay, by one accompanied with or occasioned by a general concussion of nature.^c

As shells, skeletons of fishes, marine plants, &c. are found at immense depths in the bowels of the earth, and inclosed in the hearts of rocks, upon the tops of the highest mountains,—inclosed in rocks of marble and limestone, as well as in earths and clays ; actually incorporated, intimately and completely filled, with the very substances with which they are inclosed ;—it has been represented as impossible that these effects could be owing to the universal deluge. It has been said, that "since the relics of marine productions are found in marbles, limestones, chalks,

^a Gen. iii. 17—19,

^b Gen. vii. 19.

^c Gen. vii. 11.

“marls, clays, sand, in short, in all strata, and in all situations, even in the hearts of mountains ; we must suppose these mountains and marbles to have been all formed at the very instant that the deluge took place ; and consequently, that before this grand revolution, there were neither mountains of stratified matter, nor marbles, nor clays ; and that during the few days the deluge lasted, the waters had overturned and dissolved almost the whole surface of the earth to the greatest depths ; suppositions which are altogether inadmissible.”

It is not unusual with those who embrace such systems as virtually impugn the truth of revelation, to give an unfair representation of what is found in the sacred records ; although perhaps not intentionally, yet from a most culpable negligence. Where is it said that the deluge lasted only a “few days ?” The waters increased, or continued in their full force, for upwards of five months. It was nearly nine months before the tops of the mountains were seen. More than ten had elapsed before the face of the ground was dry. Noah and his family continued above a whole year in the ark.

The changes produced during this time must have been very great ; especially as the whole frame of this earth must have been unhinged, by a cause so extraordinary as that which could produce an universal deluge.

The account of this wonderful event must be understood in consistency with itself, as it occurs in various parts of Scripture. Whether, as some have supposed, the external surface of the earth formed a great shell or crust over the waters said to have been under the earth, so that this being broken, they found abundant vent, we cannot pretend to say. But the apostle Peter may be understood as intimating, that there was something peculiar in the structure of the earth, as it existed before the deluge, which predisposed it for a watery destruction. There were some in his time, who “of this were willingly ignorant, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water, and in the water ; whereby the earth that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.” This he distinguishes from the heavens, or atmosphere, and earth “which are now ;”^a not as referring to any essential difference, but perhaps to something peculiar in their frame.

But although this language should be otherwise interpreted, it is evident, from the account given in Genesis, that the deluge must necessarily have been attended with a very great concussion of the frame of this earth. Whatever was the immediate cause, the effects were such as might produce all those phenomena that are deemed inexplicable on this ground.

When it is said, that “the fountains of the great deep were

^a 2. Pet. iii. 5, 7.

"opened," the least we can suppose is, that some great chasms were made in the earth, by means of which the waters, formerly confined in its bowels, rushed out. As this must have been produced by some extraordinary cause, whether properly of a miraculous nature or not, we are under no necessity of supposing that only the softer parts of the earth gave way. As springs flow from mountains and rocks, such fissures might be made in these as well as in the valleys. They continued open for an hundred and fifty days. When it was the divine will that they should be *stopped*, we may suppose this to have been accomplished by means of the substances, whether terrestrial or marine, that had been lodged about their mouths. If we suppose that these very mountains afterwards received the waters they had formerly discharged; they would at the same time receive a vast quantity of animal and vegetable substances. They might thus be carried down to a great depth, in the bowels of the earth; disposed in very various forms, and hence appear in *strata* by no means parallel to each other. Some of the materials might be laid in a horizontal, others in a vertical form.

It would be no wise surprising, although more relics of terrestrial animals were found on high than on low grounds, because they would flock to the mountains for safety from the swelling waters.

There is no good reason for saying, that "we must suppose these mountains and marbles to have been all formed at the very instant that the deluge took place." It is evident, from the Sacred History, that there were mountains before the deluge. But this lays us under no necessity of supposing that there were mountains containing all the *strata* which are to be found now. It may also be difficult to prove, that there were no other mountains formed by means of the deluge. Such a strange concussion might have produced deposits in places formerly level, so that they might afterwards appear as mountains. We know what great changes are produced even by a very partial and short-lived inundation. Might not masses, left in a soft state by the deluge, be indurated in the course of four thousand years? Can it be proved, that no marbles or limestones have been formed within that period? Till this can be done, it is presumption to say, that "it is impossible that these effects could be owing to the universal deluge."

The supposition, it may be said, that our earth existed long before man was created, carries in it nothing repugnant to the Sacred History; because the account given by Moses was especially meant for the instruction of man with respect to his own formation, not to supply him with any philosophical view of the origin of matter, or of the formation of the universe in general. But this will not stand the test of fair investigation. For, "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."^a That this

^a Gen. i. 1.

language respects not the mere formation of an atmosphere, sometimes called the ærial heaven, or the new modification of an earth previously existing, but the creation of all things, is evident from the reduplication which follows the history of creation; "Thus the *heavens* and the earth were finished, and *all the host* of them."^a This, as our Saviour explains it, was "the beginning of the *creation* which God created."^b All this was "in the beginning," that is, at the commencement of time; and whatever was before time, existed from eternity. Hence; when it is said, "In the beginning was the Word," it denotes, that he himself existed before any creature had a beginning, that he indeed gave being to all the creatures; for he so "*was* in the beginning," that "all things were made by him."^c

To suppose that the earth existed in a chaotic state for thousands of years before the formation of man, is to adopt a hypothesis not only inconsistent with the scriptural narrative, but entirely incongruous to divine wisdom. For it is to suppose, that God, in some very distant period, made a shapeless mass, destitute of light and heat, of atmosphere, of fertility, and of inhabitants. For all these were the effect of the creation described by Moses. How could these animals, of which the relics are found, exist on our earth before this creation, when all terrestrial and marine animals then first received their being?

It cannot reasonably be imagined, that each of the days mentioned as preceding the creation of man, may be understood of a very long period of time. This would be to suppose that God often "rested from his work." It would also destroy the unity and consistence of the Sacred History. For there is no more reason for supposing, that the portion of time, thus denominated, exceeded that of a natural day in any of the first six days, than that it did so in the seventh, which God set apart as a day of spiritual rest to man. It seems, indeed, to be one special reason why God apportioned his works through six successive days, when he could have accomplished the whole in a moment,—that he might give man the most illustrious pattern of lawful engagement on six days, and of resting on the seventh; and that, in the observation of the Sabbath, man might have a constant memorial, both of the work, and of the rest, of his almighty Maker. But, to suppose that the seventh had no analogy to the preceding days, as to duration, is to destroy the connexion, and lose the force of the argument. It seems incontrovertible, therefore, that we must either view the Mosaic history as that of the creation of the universe, or throw it aside, as entirely unworthy of our regard.

v. Scripture affords us the earliest and the only genuine account of the *origin* of the *arts*. This branch of history seems of great importance to men of a philosophical mind. But if they

^a Gen. ii. 1.

^b Mark xiii. 19.

^c John i. 1, 2.

despise the light of Scripture, they wander in the boundless wilds of conjecture. Cain was the father of agriculture ; as Abel was the first who led a pastoral life.^a Cain was also the first architect ; for he “ builded a city.”^b Jubal was the inventor of musical instruments ;^c and Tubal-cain was “ an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron.”^d It is thought, with great probability, that the scriptural account concerning Tubal-cain was the origin of the heathenish fable with respect to Vulcan, as the god who presided over metals. Noah seems to have been the first who “ planted a vineyard,” and who discovered the use of the grape.^e It is probable that navigation was unknown before his time, and that the first idea of this art was suggested by the ark that he built at the command of God. The art of brick-making seems to have been invented by the builders of Babel.^f

VI. It furnishes us with an *history* of the *world*, for the greatest part of its duration. Every thing related in prophane history, concerning the antediluvian world, bears the evident impress of fable. Yet, as has been clearly shewn by many learned writers, even these fabulous accounts are a collateral confirmation of the truth of Sacred History. These streams, however much corrupted, all proclaim a common fountain. The only account of the general dispersion of the nations is to be found here. All the vestiges of profane history, as far as they throw light on this subject, confirm the scriptural narration. Its authenticity is also illustrated by the similarity of names, as far as this species of evidence can help us to penetrate through the gloom of antiquity. The origin and progress of some of the most famous nations of ancient times, are here described with a minuteness and accuracy totally unknown to their own writers ; and others are solely indebted to Scripture in this respect. A description of the *manners and customs* of nations, is justly accounted one of the principal branches of history. By the knowledge of these, we form an estimate of the progress of mind. By comparing the manners of one nation, or of one age, with those of another, we are enabled to judge with respect to the degree of civilization ; we are also led to inquire into the causes that give birth to national manners, and the effects they produce on society. The influence of different systems of religion on manners, seems especially to deserve our attention ; as well as the influence of manners on religion ; for this influence is reciprocal. Now, in the Sacred History, we have not only a particular account of the manners of the Israelites, but innumerable references to those of other nations. There are allusions in Scripture to many ancient customs, which are more fully explained in profane history ; while some are mentioned, of which all other records are lost. But, were we better acquainted with the manners of some of the eastern nations still existing,

^a Gen. iv. 2.^b Ver. 17.^c Ver. 21.^d Ver. 22.^e Gen. ix. 20, 21.^f Gen. xi. 3.

there is reason to suppose, that much light might be thrown upon some of those passages of Scripture, which now seem covered with obscurity. The justness of this observation is proved by the useful discoveries of some modern travellers, who have found the scriptural accounts strictly verified, in respect to nations that have hitherto been little known to the rest of the world.

Chronology, or the knowledge of times, is an important branch of history. But had we not the history of the Bible, we should be totally at a loss with respect to the chronology of ancient nations. That of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Indians and Chinese, is extremely absurd, and quite incredible. The sacred chronology, however, as it is most consonant to the state of society, which opposes the idea of that high antiquity ascribed to the world by the accounts of heathen writers, enables us in some degree to adjust some of these accounts, and to interpret them in consistency with facts.^a

VII. It is only by means of Sacred History that we can account for various *facts*, the truth of which we know from profane writers. It is undeniable, that among almost all heathen nations, whether in some degree refined, or in a state of gross barbarism, time has been measured by *weeks*. Hence it naturally occurs, that this custom must have prevailed in the earliest ages, and that it must even have been transmitted from the common parents of our race. It is otherwise inconceivable, that this custom should have been so general. The division of time into years, and months, and days, may be easily accounted for, from the revolution of the sun and moon. But no natural reason can be given for the measurement of time by weeks. It must, therefore, have been originally an arbitrary distinction. But it seems difficult to imagine, that a distinction, merely of an arbitrary nature, should have been generally received, without a special reason enforcing it. Here, however, all human history fails us. It does not even furnish one probable conjecture. But we learn from the volume of inspiration, that "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his works."^b—Here we find a satisfactory account of the origin of this division of time, and of the reason of it;—a reason, which must have had such weight with his true worshippers, that they would not fail to enjoin on their posterity a religious regard to this practice. From the influence of custom, we may well suppose this mode of dividing time to have been preserved among many nations, after the reason of it was lost. This distinction, having been once employed, not merely for civil purposes, but in subserviency to religion, it would naturally be retained, even after their religious system was greatly corrupted. For men in general more rigidly adhere to times, and other external circumstances connected with religion, than even to its substance.

^a See Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. i. p. 196, &c.

^b Gen. ii. 3.

There is scarcely one nation known, which has not in some period offered bloody *sacrifices* as an atonement for sin. But the idea of thus expiating guilt is by no means natural. Reason assures us, that "the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sin;" that there is no analogy between the transgression of man and the suffering of an innocent brute. That such a custom should have taken place in one nation, would not have appeared surprising. But that it should be general, that sacrifices should prevail among the most enlightened and humane, as well as the most stupid and savage nations, is a problem, of which profane history gives no solution. The Holy Scripture, however, acquaints us with the origin of sacrifices. It proclaims their use to be nearly as ancient as the entrance of sin. We find Abel "offering of the firstlings of his flock."^a We observe the distinction of beasts, into clean and unclean, prevailing before the flood; as evidently arising from the use of the one, and the exclusion of the other, in this solemn act of religion.^b There seems to be no reason to doubt that our first parents offered sacrifices; especially as it is said, that the LORD God "made coats of skins, and clothed them."^c It is most natural to think, that these were the skins of the animals they had sacrificed; and that he covered them with these, as a token of his accepting their offerings, and as a figure of their being covered with the righteousness of the true sacrifice. For they had no authority to kill brute animals for food. As Abel offered in faith, as God accepted his offering, it seems unquestionable that this mode of worship was instituted by God himself. Thus, the institution of sacrifices, especially as it is elsewhere explained, has an evident respect to the bruising of the heel of the woman's seed, who should break the head of the serpent:^d and these offerings, which in themselves could have no worth, were acceptable to God, and useful to men, as presented in relation to the one offering of Jesus Christ.

VIII. Here we have a most particular and affecting history of *human depravity*. Men, who are strongly prejudiced on any subject, are best pleased with those histories that, without any nice scrutiny, strenuously support their own side of the question; and have not patience, perhaps, to read any other. He who really searches for truth, is willing to know the worst that may be said of his own sentiments, or of his own party. To those who are determined, in opposition to the strongest evidence, to entertain a favourable opinion of human nature, it will be no recommendation of Scripture, that it gives a representation of this directly the reverse. But every one who wishes to know himself as he really is, and who is already convinced that he is a fallen and miserable creature, will highly prize divine revelation for this very reason, that, as a faithful mirror, it holds up to him his own image,

^a Gen. iv. 4.
^c Gen. iii. 21.

^b Gen. vii. 2.
^d Ver. 15.

without any flattery, and without any distortion. Nor does it serve this end merely in those parts that are strictly doctrinal. Its history, whether it respects individuals or collective bodies, is evidently meant to convey the same important instruction.

We discern the rapid progress of corruption. Adam rebelled against his Maker. His first-born, Cain, "rose up against his brother, and slew him."^a His descendant Lamech inherited his bloody disposition. For he was also a murderer.^b Even before the death of Adam, wickedness must have been very general. According to some, that passage connected with the account of the birth of Enos, "Then began men to call upon the name of the LORD," ought to be rendered, "Then began men to profane the name of the LORD."^c It signifies, as they apprehend, that idolatry had its rise about this time; and that men openly stated themselves in opposition to the true God. It seems, however, fully more agreeable to the force of the original words, to understand them in a good sense, as referring to the worship of those who adhered to the true religion. It is highly probable, that idolatry prevailed in Cain's family, previous to this. For he "went out from the presence of the LORD."^d However acute they were in the discovery of those arts which are useful or ornamental,^e they were blind to the things of God. They discovered no inclination to divine ordinances, but continued in the apostacy and wickedness of their progenitor. From the prophecy of Enoch, "the seventh from Adam," there is every reason to suppose, that in his time men were very daring in their wickedness; that they were not only chargeable with "ungodly deeds," but that they went so far as to utter "hard speeches" against God himself.^f Those who had renounced the fear of God, soon shewed that they did not regard man.^g For "the earth was filled with violence."^h

The old world was destroyed by a flood. But corruption soon brake forth again from that very family which had been miraculously saved, and with which God had established his covenant by a new revelation. The violence which prevailed before, was not long of appearing after, the deluge.ⁱ By tyranny and persecution, Nimrod attempted to establish an universal monarchy. Therefore, the building of Babel is more immediately ascribed to him;^k and we know that the principal design of this undertaking was to preserve mankind from being dispersed and broken into separate societies; that, being one body, they might accomplish whatsoever they would.^l

Even so early as the time of Abraham, the most unnatural crimes were openly perpetrated, not by individuals only, but by a whole people; as we learn from the history of the cities of the

^a Gen. iv. 8.

^d Ver. 16.

^g Luke xviii. 2.

^k Ver. 10.

^b Ver. 23.

^e Ver. 20—22.

^h Gen. vi. 11.

^l Gen. xi. 4, 6,

^c Ver. 26.

^f Jude, ver. 14, 15.

ⁱ Gen. x. 9.

plain. So general was the corruption in worship, that God saw it to be necessary to separate Abraham from his father's family, and to call him away from his own country. For that very family, in the line of which the church was to be preserved, was contaminated with idolatry. Joshua refers to this, as a fact well known to the Israelites. "Your fathers," he says, "dwelt on the other side of the flood, in old times, even Terah the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor : and they served other gods."^a By the flood, he means the great river Euphrates. Some have supposed that the family of Abraham were fire-worshippers ; as *Ur*, the name of that city whence he was brought, signifies fire.^b It is certain that idolatrous worship was retained in the family of Laban. For he accused Jacob of stealing his gods.^c As these are called *Teraphim* or images,^d it would seem that they had been originally formed, though unwarrantably, for the purpose of inquiring of the true God by means of them. Thus they were afterwards used by Micah, even while he professed to retain the worship of JEHOVAH. His mother declared that she had "wholly dedicated her silver unto the LORD, to make a graven image, and a molten image." We are informed accordingly, that Micah "had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim." But there is no evidence that he meant to renounce the worship of the true God, although he presumed to worship him in a way which was expressly prohibited. For after all he says ; "Now know I that JEHOVAH will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest."^e It is highly probable, that this was the origin of image-worship ; and that images, though originally used only for consulting the true God, were themselves soon converted into objects of worship. So gross was the idolatry of the Egyptians, even in that early period during which the Israelites sojourned among them, that they worshipped beasts. For Moses refuses to comply with the request of Pharaoh, that they should worship God in the land, because they would be under the necessity of sacrificing "the abomination of the Egyptians," the very object of their idolatry.^f Nay, it appears that this base religion was established among them in the days of Jacob. For even then "it was an abomination to the Egyptians to eat bread with the Hebrews ;"^g because the Hebrews fed on the cattle which the Egyptians worshipped. This part of Sacred History shews us, how mournfully the mind of man is debased and brutified by sin. He who can worship a beast, must indeed be "like the beasts that perish."^h

While Israel abode in the wilderness, corruption had advanced so far among the Moabites, the posterity of Lot, that they worshipped Baal-peor, an idol to whom the vilest prostitution was accounted the most acceptable oblation. The very figure of

^a Josh. xxiv. 2.^b Gen. xv. 7.^c Gen. xxxi. 30.^d Ver. 19.^e Judg. xvii. 3, 5, 13.^f Exod. viii. 25, 26.^g Gen. xliii. 32. ; xli. 34.^h Psal. xlix. 12.

this idol is generally supposed to have been shockingly indecent. Hence that language seems to be used by the prophet ; “ They went to Baal-peor, and separated themselves unto that *shame*.”^a It was by means of this sensual worship that the artful and wicked Balaam hoped to subject Israel to that curse, which he could not bring on them by all his incantations.^b The scheme was so far successful, that “ Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor.”^c Thus, we see the fatal success of sin in defiling the mind. It has made men persuade themselves that the vilest crimes were not merely innocent actions, but acceptable worship. Under the government of “ vile affections,^d they have formed the idea, and even the likeness, of a god “ altogether such a one as themselves.”^e It has not only debased and defiled the mind in the highest degree ; but blunted all the common feelings of humanity. The most exquisite and refined sensibilities of our nature are excited towards our children. But the depravity of man hath made him more cruel than the sea-monsters, or the ostriches in the wilderness.^f Before Israel entered into the land of Canaan, its inhabitants had defiled it by human sacrifices. They made their sons and their daughters to “ pass through the fire to Molech.”^g

ix. Here we have the history of the human *heart*. Of all history, that of man is most interesting to man : and of all the history of man, the most important branch is that of the heart. In tracing its various workings, what is called the philosophy of history especially consists. To exhibit these in the most striking light, as if the field of real history were too narrow, many enter into the fairy land of fiction. But in the sacred volume, we find a variety unknown to any real or fictitious history. When we view it as unfolding the operations of the heart, may we not justly say, that it contains the substance of all that has ever been written on the subject, with unspeakable advantage ?

Without a display of the heart, the history of man would be exceedingly imperfect. It would be otherwise only a barren narrative of facts. But, in the Holy Scriptures, the heart is exhibited in all its exceedingly varied operations, traced in all its windings, and stript of all its disguises. It is represented in its different states : in its original purity, as formed after the image of God ; as it is depraved by sin ; and as partially renewed by grace. We learn its operations, as under the power of that evil spirit, who “ now worketh in the children of disobedience ;” or of that Blessed Spirit who worketh effectually in them who believe. We perceive it in various situations ; in solitude and in society ; as working in the prince, and in the beggar. In a word, we find it traced through a long succession of ages, and discern its actings in a vast variety of individuals.

^a Hos. ix. 10.

^b Numb. xxxi. 16.

^c Num. xxv. 1, 3.

^d Rom. i. 26.

^e Psal. l. 21.

^f Lam. iv. 3.

^g Lev. xviii. 21, 24 ; Deut. xviii. 9, 10.

Many are best pleased with those writings, which are most calculated to touch the more delicate strings of the heart. Some even go so far as to bring all human action to the test of sentiment. With these philosophers, feeling is the supreme standard. But where are the nicer sensibilities of the soul more beautifully delineated than in the page of inspiration? Let any impartial person say, if he ever saw the tenderness of brotherly affection more finely painted than in the history of Joseph? What heart so callous, as not to be moved by the disinterestedness of the afflicted Naomi, the more than filial attachment of Ruth, or the unaffected benevolence of Boaz? Even while the understanding disapproves the conduct of David, on occasion of the death of Absalom, the heart takes a deep interest in his paternal sorrow. We overlook the folly of the king, in feeling for the affliction of the father.

That branch of the history of the heart, which conveys the most humiliating lessons, is very largely handled. I mean, that of its depravity. To unfold this, is evidently one of the principal designs of Sacred History. A great part of it is clearly a commentary on that affecting text; "God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth; and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."^a This humbling character of man is given, not merely before the deluge, but also immediately after it.^b As the history of the old world is concluded, the history of the new is introduced, with this reflection. It forms the funeral dirge of the antediluvians, and the mournful birth-song of their posterity. The waters of the flood could wash away the corrupt, but could not remove corruption. They could cleanse the earth, but not the heart of man. God "smelled a savour of rest" from the earth; but he never found a place of rest, worthy of his purity, in any heart, till he found it in the First-born of the new creation.^c

As Scripture supplies us with the history of the progress of corruption among mankind in general, we also learn from it the progress of corruption in the heart of an individual. Let us take for example that of our first parents. In the history of their conduct, immediately after the fall, we may observe the rapid progress of sin, and its astonishing influence in debasing the soul. Shame instantly succeeded sin, and terror at God as an enemy, which plainly shewed that they had become "enemies in their minds." What a dark cloud immediately overspread their understandings? How could they otherwise have thought of concealing themselves from the all-seeing eye amidst the thick trees of the garden? How much must conscience have been hardened, when they could offer such silly excuses for their rebellion! Adam dissembles the true reason of his fear. He ascribes it to the nakedness of his body, while it was that of his soul. He seems already in a great measure dead to natural affection. To extenu-

^a Gen. vi. 5.

^b Chap. viii. 21.

^c Isa. lxvi. 1, 2.

ate his own guilt, he accuses her, whom he had a little before called "bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh." He had foretold that a man should "cleave to his wife," at the expense of forsaking father and mother. But although he did cleave to her in sin, he wished to be parted from her as to punishment. Nay, what arrogance and obduracy appear in that language; "The woman whom *thou gavest me*," &c. as if the blame had been God's!

We also learn the progress of the heart towards the commission of one outward act of sin, and the various secret iniquities which pave the way for it. In the history of Cain, we perceive his failure in duty to God preceding his want of regard for his brother. Envy gives birth to resentment, and both issue in murder. Indeed, from the scripture-history in general, we learn this important truth, that from the heart of man all the evil of his conduct proceeds. The same history affords us a striking proof of the hardening nature of sin. Cain lies in the face of God, in answer to that question; "Where is Abel thy brother?" He boldly replies, "I know not." He denies the primary bonds of society, and virtually accuses God of want of wisdom in his government, by that presumptuous question; "Am I my brother's keeper?" He arraigns divine justice, with respect to the sentence pronounced, when he says; "My punishment is greater than I can bear." Instead of supplicating mercy, he endeavours to silence any remains of conviction, by building a city^a

x. We have here an history of the mournful fruits of human depravity. Does it seem strange that a considerable part of the history of Scripture should be occupied about the cruel and destructive wars carried on by ancient nations? What is the history of mankind in general, but a narrative of the crimes of men, and of their fatal consequences? This could not be a just history of mankind, were these overlooked. Are the feelings shocked at such descriptions? It is God's design that our feelings should be shocked at the cause, from a due consideration of its native effects. It is his will that we should hate sin, which produces all these miseries. He teaches us that the lusts of men are the true source of "wars and fightings;"^b that, notwithstanding the veil of mystery thrown over them, they in general proceed from a savage wish to destroy,^c from the ferocity of revenge, or at least from the restlessness of ambition.

It has been said, that the Bible is the most improper book that can be put into the hands of youth; that it directly tends to harden the tender mind, by giving such a shocking view of human nature, by exhibiting so many scenes of murder and devastation. But while this is equally an argument against history in general, we boldly avow, that to give such a representation, was one prin-

^a Gen. iv. 9, 13, 17.

^b Jam. iv. 1.

^c Isa. x. 7.

principal end for which the Holy Scriptures were written. They are a glass in which man may discern his own likeness. We talk of its being necessary, that young persons should see a little of the world, and become acquainted with the ways of men. Send them to the word of God. There, if their eyes be opened, they will most certainly learn the natural state and true character of man. Its very order and connexion seem designed to give us the most humiliating and impressive view of human depravity.—But this shall be illustrated in another place.

XI. The Scripture contains an history of Providence. The whole history of mankind is indeed nothing else ; though few understand it aright. The truth of divine providence is so evident from the government of the world, that it has been generally acknowledged even by those who had not the benefit of revelation. Those only, who are “ brutish among the people,” can deny, that he who “ planted the ear should hear, that he who formed the eye “ should see.” Does impious man dare to deny this ? What is the reflection that divine wisdom makes on his conduct ? “ The “ LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.”^a

We learn from scripture-history, not merely the great outlines of God’s providential conduct ; but are made acquainted with the specialities of his operation. We are not left to conjecture the connexion between the cause and the effect. This is clearly pointed out.—But we reserve a more particular consideration of this subject till afterwards.

XII. An history of the divine *decrees*. The whole history of Providence is merely an history of God’s purposes. We know that nothing takes place by chance, as far as it respects him ; and we are equally assured, that he does nothing in consequence of any unforeseen exigency. “ Known unto God are all his works “ from the beginning of the world.”^b And how known, but because he has determined to effect them ? Therefore, he is said to “ work all things according to the counsel of his will.”^c Many of these purposes lie hid in the Eternal Mind, till they are declared by Providence. Others are expressed in prophecy, and so known before the event. This was the case as to the temporary desolation of Judea by Sennacherib, therefore called a “ *consumption decreed* ;”^d the captivity of the Jews in Babylon,^e and a vast variety of events recorded in Scripture. Often is the hand of God clearly seen in those providential operations of which there has been no previous intimation. But when he not only stamps the ordinary characters of divine operation on the work itself, but displays his faithfulness in the completion of prophecy, the purpose and providence of God reflect a beautiful lustre on each other. The purpose, as previously declared, illustrates the

^a Psal. xciv. 8—11.

^b Acts xv. 18.

^c Eph. i. 11.

^d Isa. x. 22.

^e Dan. ix. 24.

providence ; and the providence clearly manifests the immutability of the purpose. When the prediction is of the nature of a promise, the event not only displays immutable faithfulness, but infinite love.

XIII. The history of the Bible is a key to *prophecy*. It serves this important purpose in various respects. For, first, it in the clearest manner demonstrates the truth, and illustrates the meaning of many predictions. By giving a particular account of the events which are foretold, it affords us an opportunity of bringing prophecy to the touchstone of facts ; and by acquainting us, in a variety of instances, with the date of the prediction, enables us to trace its exact verification even as to the time. Thus, we have the most satisfying evidence of the faithfulness of that God, who declares “ the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done.”^a We have also the greatest encouragement to trust him, as to all that concerns us, or the church in general ; and particularly, to assure ourselves, that he will, in his own time, fulfil all the prophecies which are yet to be accomplished.

Secondly, The prophecies are full of allusions to the facts recorded, and to the manners and customs described in Scripture. The knowledge of both the ancient and modern manners of the oriental nations, derived from profane history, may be very useful for illustrating the language of prophecy. But the Sacred History will be found sufficient for obviating the most of those difficulties which arise from prophetic language ; especially if we view it in connexion with the explications which the prophets themselves give of the figurative expressions they use.

Thirdly, “ It is customary with the prophets, in describing “ the latter enemies of the church, to call them by the names of “ her former persecutors.—Thus, Rome is called Babylon, for “ her oppression of the people of God, Sodom for her impurity, “ Egypt for her idolatry : and, by the Old Testament prophets, “ Tyre for her traffic, Idumea or Edom for her carnal relation to “ Christians, by professing their religion.”^b The ancient enemies of the church were indeed figures of those in our own times. It is therefore of importance to us to be well acquainted with their history, as in their characters we have a delineation of the characters of those who now oppose the kingdom of Christ.

Again, many of the prophecies refer to different events, which were to take place at periods very remote from each other. Those prophecies, which declare the sufferings of God’s ancient church from literal Babylon, have a further and special reference to her sufferings from mystical Babylon. In like manner, the predictions concerning her deliverance from the former ultimately

^a Isa. xlv. 10. ^b Frazer’s Key to the Prophecies of the Old and New Testament, which are not yet accomplished, p. 34, 36.

respect her deliverance from the latter. Therefore, the history of the afflictions and liberation of the church from ancient Babylon, throws great light on the prophecies with respect to Antichrist. Particularly, from the primary illustration of these prophecies by the history of the Jewish church, we may gather many important circumstances in regard to their future accomplishment in the destruction of "the mother of harlots."

In fine, the history of the Bible throws a beautiful light around its predictions, by acquainting us with a variety of circumstances respecting the delivery of these, which signally illustrate the wisdom, justice, goodness, and other perfections of God. How true, how excellent soever these predictions in themselves, they would lose much of their beauty, did we not know the concomitant circumstances. What a precious prophecy is that concerning "the seed of the woman!" But it would contain a far less conspicuous display of the mercy of our God, were we not assured, that it was uttered immediately after man had rebelled against him.^a The history of thousands of years verifies the prediction of Noah with respect to the servile state of the posterity of Canaan. But, as the prediction stands in the Sacred History, we discover that they were to be reduced to this despicable condition, as the punishment of the iniquity of their progenitor. We at the same time observe, that the piety of Japhet to his father is rewarded, by the admission of his posterity into a participation of the blessing of Shem.^b The Spirit of God hath not deemed it sufficient to record the beautiful and striking prophecy of Balaam. He hath also given us the history of this man. Our acquaintance with his character, conduct and fate, instead of depreciating his prophecy in our estimation, greatly enhances its worth. It appears as the testimony of an enemy; who was hired for the very purpose of cursing Israel; who had come a great way, and had tried every art of divination in his power, in order to gain his end; who was under the dominion of covetousness; who was impelled, by every motive of interest, to the accomplishment of his design; who, in a word, would never have given this testimony, had it been possible for him to have withheld it.^c

xiv. The sacred volume contains an history of the *church* for more than four thousand years. If we view the "sure word of prophecy" as a supplement to the narrative of facts, this history may be said to extend from the first planting of the church in this world to her complete transplantation to heaven, her native country. Here we see her in her various situations, whether prosperous or adverse. At first she appears, as afterwards did her Glorious Head, "as a plant springing out of a dry ground." This gradually increases, till at length "the hills are covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof are like the good-

^a Gen. iii. 8, 15.

^b Gen. ix. 23, 27.

^c Numb. xxii. xxiii. xxiv.

“ly cedars. She sends her boughs to the sea, and her branches “unto the rivers.” But often is this vine wasted by “the boar “out of the wood,” and devoured by “the wild beast of the “field.”^a At times it seems to be burnt with fire, and cut “down.”^b Or, the church presents the appearance of a tree stripped of all its beautiful foliage, by the cruel blast of winter. She “is as a teil-tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves.”^c

We find, that God condescends to assume the character of an husbandman, and observe innumerable evidences of his love to his vineyard. It is evident, that he says not in vain, “My vine- “yard which is mine is before me.—I the LORD do keep it, I will “water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night “and day.”^d Thus we perceive, that one important end that God had in view, in committing to the church the oracles of truth, was to “make his wonderful works to be remembered.”^e

xv. An history of the work of *redemption*. This is the most glorious of all the works of God. Therefore, we need not wonder, that it is the great subject of Sacred History. This is traced back to its inconceivable *origin*, in the counsel of peace, in the eternal covenant among the persons of the adorable Trinity. In this respect, the Redeemer declares, “I was set up from ever- “lasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.”^f All the “spiritual blessings” of redemption are exhibited as the streams flowing from the eternal and infinite fountain of sovereign love in the heart of God.^g The Scripture unfolds the astonishing preparation made, through a long succession of ages, for the actual accomplishment of this work. Sin, we see, is suffered to enter, that “where sin abounded, grace might much more abound.”^h Immediately on this melancholy event, the purpose of God to save some of lost mankind is proclaimed, and the astonishing remedy is pointed out, in the first gospel-promise. We see the special providence of God exercised, in preserving a holy seed, during the antediluvian æra, by means of whom the promise should be transmitted to posterity. When human wickedness had so greatly increased as to threaten the very existence of the church, the wicked world was destroyed by means of that deluge of water by which the church was saved. When the revealed doctrine and instituted worship were greatly corrupted, God separated Abraham from his father’s family, and afterwards his posterity, by Jacob, from all the families of the earth, for the preservation of his truths. To them he gave his statutes, and his judgments. He brought them under the yoke of the ceremonial law, ‘as a “shadow of good things to come.”ⁱ He subjected them to himself as their Sovereign, as a prelude of the sub-

^a Psal. lxxx. 10, 11, 13.

^b Ver. 10.

^c Isa. vi. 13.

^d Song viii. 12; Isa. xxvii. 3.

^e Psal. cxi. 4.

^f Prov. viii. 23.

^g Eph. i. 3, 4, 7.

^h Rom. v. 20.

ⁱ Heb. x. 1.

jection of the spiritual Israel to the King of Zion. He gave them a typical Mediator, a typical redemption, and a typical inheritance. When this people apostatized from him, he visited them with severe judgments, and at length cast them into the hot furnace of Babylon ; to reclaim them from idolatry, that the truth might not perish, and that the great promise concerning the coming of the Messiah might not be buried in oblivion.

In these transactions, indeed, we have a particular history of the covenant of grace. We see it first revealed in the promise made to our common parents, immediately after the fall. We find it renewed with Noah, after the flood. On this occasion, God appoints the rainbow to be a symbol of the perpetuity of his covenant ; and gives to Noah a new grant of the earth in relation to this covenant, after he had offered a sacrifice, acceptable to God, as prefiguring the sacrifice of Christ, which takes away the curse from man, and makes him "an heir of the world."^a We have afterwards an account of the renovation of the same covenant with Abraham,^b with Isaac,^c and with Jacob ;^d with Israel, when God brought them up out of Egypt ;^e and with David, under the figure of a covenant of royalty with him and his seed.^f

The gradual *increase* of the light of revelation, with respect to the Saviour, particularly deserves our attention. The first gospel promise may indeed be viewed as a summary of all that was afterwards communicated to the church. In it, a Deliverer is promised, who should be a partaker of our nature, and a descendant of Eve ; who should destroy the power of the old serpent that had deceived her ; and who should himself suffer in the conflict. Here was enough for faith. But it was the pleasure of God gradually to open up the import of this promise to the Church, and to increase her light with respect to the glorious Deliverer promised. Accordingly, he was afterwards made known to Abraham, as that seed in whom "all the families of the earth," sinners of the Gentiles, as well as his posterity, "should be blessed."^g This promise was a commentary on the prophecy of Noah : that God should "enlarge," or persuade "Japhet, and make him to dwell "in the tents of Shem."^h Christ is foretold by Moses, not merely as a Prophet, but as one who should give a new dispensation to his church, and whom she was to "hear in all things," in preference to himself, and all other prophets.ⁱ By David, he is revealed as an eternal priest,^k as a divine king ;^l and yet as condemned by the great council, and cru-

^a Gen. viii. 20, 21 ; ix. 1—3, 11—17.

^b Gen. xvii. 2—8.

^d Gen. xxviii. 13, 14.

^f 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

^h Gen. ix. 27.

^k Psal. cx. 4.

^c Gen. xxvi. 3.

^e Exod. vi. 4, 5.

^g Gen. xxii. 18.

ⁱ Deut. xviii. 18.

^l Psal. xlv. 6.

cified ; *a* as rising again, *b* ascending, *c* and sitting down at the right-hand of God. *d* He is prophesied of by Isaiah as the son of a virgin ; *e* while his character as a surety, and the expiatory nature of his sufferings, are more particularly declared. *f* By the ministry of Daniel, the Messiah is pointed out by name, as “ cut off, but not for himself ;” the effects of his death are more plainly expressed ; and the very time of it is limited. *g* By Malachi, the last of the prophets, his people are forewarned, that “ the LORD whom they seek, shall suddenly come to his temple.” He is distinguished by a new character, that of “ the messenger,” or “ angel of the covenant ;” and the spirit and work of his harbinger are particularly foretold. *h*

Thus, the revelation concerning the Saviour, which seems at first as a feeble spring breaking forth in a desert, becomes gradually deeper and wider, by the accession of many tributary streams, till at length it swells into “ a river, which cannot be passed over.” *i* In the first promise, it appears as a single ray of light, darted from heaven in pity to our benighted world. Although many emblems of night still remain, yet the clouds and darkness gradually disappear before the increasing light, till at length “ the sun of righteousness “ arises with healing in his wings.” *k* The whole of his “ going forth is evidently prepared as the morning. *l* When he appears, the Church enjoys a morning without clouds.” *m* But had we not the history of the Church recorded by the Spirit of God, we should not only want many precious prophecies, which are interwoven with it, but be unable to trace the beautiful progress of this divine light.

The *truth* of the predictions concerning the Messiah is fully demonstrated by the history of Scripture. As God was pleased to promise a Redeemer nothing could be of more importance than to identify his person, to point him out so exactly that the Church could not mistake him. At first view, no part of Scripture seems more uninteresting than the Genealogies. But even this part, as well as prophecy, is the testimony of Jesus. It was predicted, that the Messiah should be the “ seed of the woman.” The promise was, many ages after, restricted to the seed of Abraham ; afterwards, to the tribe of Judah ; and at last to the family of David. Had not God exercised the greatest care about the genealogies of the Jews, so as to preserve those of the different tribes distinct, it could not have been known that Jesus was that seed promised to David, and thus descending from Judah. It was equally necessary that the genealogy of Abraham should be traced up to Adam, that it might be evident that the Messiah was descended from “ the mother of all living,” and thus of “ one

a Psal. xxiii. 16.

b Psal. xvi. 10 ; Acts ii. 31.

c Isa. vii. 14. *f* Isa. liii.

i Ezek. xlvii. 4.

m 2 Sam. xxiii. 4.

c Psal. lxxviii. 18.

g Dan. ix. 24.

k Mal. iv. 2.

d Psal. cx. 1.

h Mal. iii. 1—3 ; iv. 5, 6.

l Hos. vi. 2.

"blood" with those whom he was to redeem. The enemies of Jesus often reproached him with being a Nazarene, because he had been brought up at Nazareth, a contemptible village of Galilee. But they never presumed to deny that he was of the royal line. Nothing could have been easier than to have proved that he had no claim to that title, "the son of David," had this been indeed the case. They had only to refer to their genealogies. Providence had provided an unquestionable proof of the truth of Christ's descent from David, in the enrolment of Joseph and Mary in the records of their own city of Bethlem, in consequence of the decree of Augustus, that all the empire should be taxed.^a A minute description is given of the circumstances of the conception of Jesus, that we might know that he was indeed the "seed of the woman," *that* Immanuel who should be born of a virgin.

Here we have also the history of the *purchase* of redemption, and a particular account of the means more immediately connected with it. The circumstances respecting the conception and birth of Jesus, must affect the mind of every impartial reader with a conviction of the superior dignity of the person. So much light is thrown on this astonishing picture, as to shew that the remaining shade is entirely voluntary. When "the true Light" rises on the Church, although he rises under a cloud, such rays of divine splendour break forth from him, as to demonstrate, in the clearest manner, that this cloud is occasioned, not by his weakness, but by ours. "The form of a servant," like a thin veil thrown over the body, seems only so far to hide "the form of God," as to shew that the first is voluntarily assumed, and that the second is necessary. Angels proclaim his conception. **JEHOVAH** himself gives his Church this sign ;—a virgin conceives, and bears a son.^b He, who should be his harbinger, leaps in his mother's womb for joy at the approach of his Lord. Angels announce his birth in anthems of praise. All these hosts of heaven "worship him."^c A star, unknown to astronomers, is kindled in the firmament by this glorious Light in his rising ; and serves as a signal for pointing out to the wise men that humble temple where they should worship. Fear not, O ye sages, that ye shall be found guilty of the crime imputable to your less enlightened brethren of the East. They worship the natural sun, or fire as his emblem. But the object of your adoration is "the Sun of righteousness." Ye "have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him." And what is the sun himself but *his* star ; one of those luminaries, which are all "the work of his fingers ?"

In the history of the *life* of Christ, we have the most perfect pattern of holiness. His conduct is not merely characterized by spotless innocence. Divine wisdom shines forth in his doctrine, and divine goodness in his works. We find him testifying, that

^a Luke ii. 1. &c.

^b Isa. vii. 14 ; Mat. i. 22—25.

^c Luke ii. 13 ; Heb. i. 6.

"it became him to fulfil all righteousness : " And had he not done so, he could not have been " such an high-priest as became us."

The gospel-history also contains a most minute account of the circumstances of his death. Although this was the lowest depth of his humiliation, there are a variety of circumstances which shew in the clearest manner, that all this humiliation was voluntary, and that the sufferer was " truly the Son of God." Even when he delivered himself as a captive into the hands of his enemies, he shewed his infinite power over them. Such was the efficacy accompanying these words, " I am *he*," that they went backward, " and fell to the ground."^a When hanging in the most ignominious manner on the accursed tree, he rescued a sinner from the power of the second death. When his hour was come, he voluntarily *gave up* his spirit. By crying with a loud voice, immediately before his exit, he shewed that his death was not merely his suffering as a sacrifice, but his act as the great high-priest. As a new light appeared in the firmament to announce his birth, the great luminary of heaven put on a covering of blackness at his death. " The rocks rent," as if they would accuse the more obdurate hearts of his murdering enemies.

But we derive no benefit from this important history, unless we duly attend to those circumstances which respect the expiatory nature of his death. That astonishing prayer, which preceded it, illustrates this in the clearest manner. Thence we find that it was entirely for the sake of his people that he sanctified himself.^b Before he " gave up the ghost," he said, " It is finished." The prophecies and other parts of Scripture explain the meaning of this language. From them we learn that, as Messiah the Prince was cut off, it was " not for himself ; " but that the design of his excision was, that he might " finish the transgression, " make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring " in everlasting righteousness."^c The expense of the purchase of our redemption especially appears from the severity of the sufferings sustained by this glorious person. Overwhelming as his bodily agony must have been, it could not be compared with that of his soul. So violent was this, even while he had no suffering in his body proceeding from any other source, that " his " sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the " ground."^d It was only of the trouble and sorrow of his soul that he complained. A comparison of the history with the prophecies clearly shews that the righteous Judge " made his soul " an offering for sin."^e In other sufferers, the agonies of the body have often occasioned its separation from the soul. In this sufferer, the agony of the soul alone threatened a dissolution of its union with the body. Therefore he said ; " My soul " is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death."^f

^a John xviii. 6.

^d Luke xxii. 44,

^b John xvii. 19.

^e Isa. liii. 10.

^c Dan. ix. 24.

^f Matt. xxvi. 38.

The history of the resurrection and ascension of our Saviour supplies us with the strongest proofs of the perfection of his sacrifice, and therefore of the truth of his purchase of redemption. The *success* of this work especially appears from that striking history which we have of the propagation of Christianity in the Acts of the Apostles. Only a few days after the ascension of Christ, the power of his death, and the efficacy of his "intercession for the transgressors," are signally displayed in the conversion of many thousands of those who embued their hands in his blood. The history of the conversion of Saul has been justly considered as one of the strongest evidences of the truth of Christianity. We cannot conceive that one could have been actuated by a more inveterate hatred against this religion, or by a more ardent zeal for its destruction. Yet, by the power of divine grace, he becomes a "preacher of that faith which once he "destroyed." In a word, such was the power attending the gospel, that, in less than thirty years after our Saviour's ascension, his religion was propagated through the greatest part of Asia and Europe.

xvi. We also perceive the *subserviency* of all the other works of God, and of all the great events among men, to the work of redemption. We perceive their subserviency in a twofold respect ; either as preparing for the purchase of redemption, or as conducing to its success. This is that centre in which all the great lines of Providence meet. So early as the general dispersion of the nations, God allotted to each of them their inheritance, so as to leave the land of Canaan for the Israelites.— "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, "when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the "people, according to the number of the children of Israel."^a He did not indeed suffer this land to lie waste. He prepared it for his people, by giving the temporary possession of it to the posterity of Canaan, whom he had previously devoted, because of their iniquities, to extermination, to expulsion, or to servitude. He in the mean time employed them as ploughmen and vine-dressers for those who were the proper heirs. He gave them their inheritance in this pleasant land, in preference to every other, in subserviency to the work for which he designed them. They were to be his witnesses to the heathen nations,—witnesses to the truth of revelation, and particularly to the great doctrines of the divine unity, and of salvation through a promised Messiah. Therefore he placed them in a country situated about the middle of the then known world. Thence the *Mediterranean* sea, which skirted the land of Palestine, received its name, as being that sea which was supposed to be *in the middle of the earth*. The church seems to refer to this circumstance, when she says ; "For God is my king of old, working salvation, in the midst

^a Deut. xxxii. 8.

"of the earth."^a Her situation was peculiarly adapted for the display of her testimony for God, in opposition to the polytheism, idolatry, and other abominations of the surrounding heathen. It was no less proper for the manifestation of God's wonderful works in her behalf. They could not possibly be strangers to the many temporal deliverances which he wrought for her.—That spiritual salvation, which all these prefigured, was not less exposed to their view. We could not imagine a more proper scene for such a glorious work. Therefore the Church sings, "The LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of *all the nations.*"^b

Abstractly it may seem a strange dispensation, that this people, preferred to every other, should be subjected by God to "a yoke of bondage," to which no other people was ever subjected. But this was merely in subserviency to the great work of redemption. For "the law was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made."^c It was meant as a bridle, to restrain the lusts of a stubborn and rebellious people. It was also intended as a "schoolmaster, to bring them to Christ;"^d that by its severity they might be convinced that they could not be saved by it.

The destruction of the Babylonian monarchy was a great event in Providence. But we learn from Scripture, that it was especially meant for the good of the church. God had prepared Babylon as a furnace for her. But that she might not perish in it, after she was sufficiently melted, tried and refined, he delivered her by the destruction of Babylon. Therefore he says; "For thy sake, I have sent to Babylon, and brought down all her nobles."^e Such were the means which he was pleased to employ for the preservation of this people, in order to the completion of the promise, that the Messiah should descend from them, according to the flesh.

This subserviency to the work of redemption, is not merely to be discerned in the dispensations of Providence. It is evident that even the work of creation ultimately had a similar respect. The same language is used; not as if the work of redemption were merely likened to that of creation, as the less is often likened to the greater; but because the first creation prefigured the second. Therefore we find the latter preferred to the former; "Behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind."^f

xvii. In the history of the Bible, we have a striking display of the *unity* of the church in all her successive ages. Here we trace her progress, like that of a river. At first she makes but a poor appearance. She owes her existence to a slender spring. For

^a Psal. lxxiv. 12.
^d Ver. 24.

^b Isa. lii. 9, 10.
^e Isa. xliii. 14.

^c Gal. iii. 19.
^f Isa. lxxv. 17.

a long time she is confined within very narrow banks. But we see her gradually diffusing herself, till at length she appears as "a broad flowing stream." But as it is with a literal river, so is it here. Although it be not the self-same water that flows, as it proceeds from the same fountain, and runs in the same channel, the river is still accounted the same. In like manner, we perceive the perpetuity of the church. How weak are her beginnings? During the antediluvian, the patriarchal, and the Mosaic periods, she is confined to very narrow limits. But nothing can be more plain than that all her true members, during these periods, were saved in a way essentially the same with that in which Christians are saved. As we especially learn from that beautiful compend of ecclesiastical history contained in the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, they were all saved by faith. This faith still rested on a divine testimony. It still respected a spiritual salvation, a Divine Person incarnate, an atonement to be made by him. It still looked forward to a better inheritance than any that this world could afford. It still produced good works as its natural fruits. It was uniformly productive of a separation from the seed of the serpent.

xviii. The history of Scripture *illustrates* and *confirms* many of its most important *doctrines*. For "whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope."^a Thus we find, that a principal reason of the history of Abraham being so particularly narrated, was that the Church might be instructed in the great doctrine of justification by imputed righteousness. Let us attend to the language of the apostle Paul on this head. "What saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.—Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed unto him; *but for us also*, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead."^b Sacred History contains a striking and copious illustration of the doctrine of the divine perfections. These are most clearly exhibited in the whole history of creation, of providence, and of redemption. His wisdom and power, his holiness and justice, as well as his long-suffering and faithfulness, are signally displayed in his conduct towards the enemies of the church. The same perfections, together with his love, appear in all their glory in his conduct towards the church herself. When God "makes his wonderful works to be remembered," it is to manifest that "he is *gracious and full of compassion*. He hath shewed his people the *power* of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen. The works of his hand are *verity and judgment*. He sent redemption unto his people, he hath commanded his covenant for ever: *holy and reverend* is his name."^c But on this use of Sacred History, as illustrating and confirming reveal-

^a Rom. xv. 4

^b Rom. iv. 3, 23, 24.

^c Psal. cxi. 4—9.

ed truths, I enlarge not at present ; as it is meant to take an extensive view of it in the progress of this work.

xix. I shall only further observe, that the history of Scripture exhibits many *patterns* for our *imitation*, and many *beacons* for our *admonition*. It does not merely illustrate doctrines ; it recommends duties, from a great variety of the most engaging examples. It deters us from sin, by a representation of its bitter consequences, as realized in the experience of the unbelieving and disobedient. The worthies, whose history is recorded in Scripture, are represented as “a great cloud of witnesses, with whom we are compassed about,” whose example should excite “us to lay aside every weight, and to run with patience the race that is set before us.”^a Concerning the judgments inflicted on the Israelites, we are informed, that “these things were our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.”^b

From the preceding observations it follows, as a native inference, that it is only from Sacred History that we can learn the proper use of all other ancient history. In the writings of the heathen, indeed, we may find the same facts related. They contain an account of the same crimes, and of the same consequences. But here they are exhibited in such a light, as tends to make a far deeper impression on the mind. The crimes of mankind are all traced to the polluted fountain of sin in the heart. The origin of this pollution is also pointed out. We perceive the gradual operation of this poison, as contaminating the whole mass of mankind, and bringing destruction on a world.—When we read the heathen accounts of the conquest of the Babylonians by Cyrus, or of the Persians by Alexander, or of the Greeks by the Romans, while we at the same time believe an over-ruling Providence, we are at a loss to perceive any design worthy of God, in successively subjecting different monarchies to the power of others, that were not in themselves more beneficial to men. We do not see that society gained any thing by the successive subversion of the Babylonian, Persian and Grecian empires. But when we turn up the volume of inspiration, we find, that Cyrus was raised up, and that Babylon was destroyed, for the liberation of God’s captives. We admire his Providence, in establishing the Grecian on the ruins of the Persian monarchy, that he might prepare the way for the propagation of the gospel, by the diffusion of one language throughout the East : of that language in which it was his will that the New Testament should be written. We see still more reason to admire his wisdom in establishing the Roman empire, and giving it greater extent than any of those that preceded it ; that thus the way might be more open for his messengers, in their glorious work of publishing peace to the nations. In a word, by the successive overthrow of such mighty

^a Heb. xii. 1.

^b 1 Cor. x. 6.

empires, we see that he means to exhibit to men the most striking contrast between these and that dominion that "shall never be given to another people;"—a contrast the more striking, as in its origin it resembled "a stone cut out of a mountain without hands;" destitute of all the advantages of the preceding empires; yet victorious, though opposed to them all.

It is an important consideration on this subject, which is taken notice of by the great Edwards; that the Sacred History contains very particular accounts of those periods to which profane history does not reach, while it is less particular with respect to succeeding times, concerning which we have authentic records of human composure. Speaking of the period from the Babylonish captivity to the coming of Christ, he gives it as one reason why there is no inspired history of it; that "God in his providence took care, that there should be authentic and full accounts of the events of this period preserved in profane history. It is remarkable," he adds, "and very worthy to be taken notice of, that with respect to the events of the five preceding periods, of which the Scriptures give the history, profane history gives us no account, or at least of but very few of them. There are many fabulous and uncertain accounts of things that happened before; but the beginning of the times of authentic profane history is judged to be but a little before Nebuchadnezzar's time, about an hundred years before. The learned men among the Greeks and Romans, used to call the ages before that the *fabulous age*; but the times after that they called the *historical age*. And from about that time to the coming of Christ, we have undoubted accounts in profane history of the principal events; accounts that wonderfully agree with the many prophecies that we have in Scripture of those times.

"Thus did the great God, that disposes all things, order it. He took care to give an historical account of things from the beginning of the world, through all those former ages which profane history does not reach, and ceased not till he came to those later ages in which profane history related things with some certainty: and concerning those times, he gives us abundant account in prophecy, that by comparing profane history with those prophecies, we might see the agreement."^a

Thus the Deist has no reason to object, that the history of former periods is unworthy of credit, because it is not supported by the testimony of other writers. For if the events of latter periods, which are recorded by uninspired historians, are found perfectly to agree with the scriptural predictions, as will be admitted by every impartial enquirer; it affords a convincing proof of the credibility of scripture, in those accounts which precede the æra of profane history.

^a History of Redemption, pp. 123, 124.

We perceive great encouragement to "search the Scriptures." We are not merely to read particular select portions, but to search the Sacred Writings in general. We must not confine our attention to the doctrinal parts, but extend it to the historical. Even in these, which at first view may seem to be little interesting to us, we shall find much that is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."^a

We may also learn, from what has been already observed, that infinite love to the church characterizes all the divine operations. In the whole of God's management of the kingdoms of this world, nay, in the whole of his conduct towards mankind in general, he displays his tender care of that kingdom that shall never have an end. Such is his love to the subjects of it, that he "suffers no man to do them wrong; yea, he reproves kings for their sakes; saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm."^b He avows his preference of the church to every other society. He counts other kingdoms but a small price for her liberation: "I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life."^c

SECTION II.

On the Beauties of Sacred History.

LET us now attend to some of the *peculiar beauties* of Sacred History.

I. The first I shall take notice of is its uncommon *simplicity*. No art appears in the framing of the narrative. Every thing is related in the plainest manner. No attempt is made to engage the reader by ornate diction, or to interest his passions by what has been called historical painting. Facts are left to speak for themselves. Even this simplicity has an effect that has never been produced by the most polished composition. The style of Sacred History evidently bears a character that is altogether inimitable, and that plainly declares its divine origin.

II. Its *conciseness* constitutes a further recommendation. No human history, of the same compass, contains such a vast variety of information. No tedious narration fatigues or disgusts the reader. The fulness of Scripture extends even to its historical style. A few words often contain more than is found in whole

^a 2 Tim. iii. 16.

^b Psal. cv. 14, 15.

^c Isa. xlii. 3, 4.

pages of human writings. The more it is examined, the more it is admired. While it possesses all the advantages of an abridgment, it wants its dryness. Nothing of real importance is omitted.

III. The Sacred History is eminently distinguished for its *fidelity* and *impartiality*. Truth is the great recommendation of history. Nothing deserves the name that wants this character ; nor can any thing else supply its place. But the history of the Bible possesses it in a degree unknown to any other writing. The adversaries of our holy religion, notwithstanding the great variety of their attempts, have never been able to prove the charge of falsity. In many of those human histories, which are most read, and most valued, vice is veiled or extenuated, so that it loses much of its native deformity ; and actions truly virtuous, are exhibited in such a light as to excite the ridicule, or the disgust of the reader. Evil actions are ascribed to the best of principles, and good actions to the worst. A good character is often exhibited as if it had no alloy of imperfection ; and a bad one, as if it absolutely excluded any degree of praise. But the language of inspiration always paints wickedness in its own colours, and exhibits righteousness in a most attractive light. If, in particular instances, there be no express condemnation of what is sinful, it is never vindicated or palliated. If an immoral action is related, without any particular intimation of its turpitude ; either the reader is left to learn this from the immutable standard of the divine law ; or some circumstances in the narrative itself, or in the following history of the person, afford the most satisfying evidence of the divine disapprobation. In the account given of the disgraceful consequences of Noah's drunkenness, the evil of his conduct is plainly reprov'd.^a Abraham is not expressly condemned for taking Hagar to his bed. We are left to learn the sinfulness of the action, not only from its contrariety to the original law, but from its punishment, in the course of Providence, in the quarrels introduced into his family in consequence of it. The account of the sin, and that of the punishment, are in the closest connexion. Abraham "went in unto Hagar, and she conceived ; "and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was "despised in her eyes. And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong "be upon thee,"^b &c. Many years after, was Abraham's transgression reprov'd by the conduct of Ishmael. The worthy patriarch, by this sin, proceeding from the impatience of unbelief, raised up in his own family a persecutor of the promised seed. Ishmael's mockery of Isaac must have proceeded from a very bad principle.^c For an inspired apostle makes this reflection on it : "He that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was "born after the Spirit."^d

There is no express condemnation of the guilt of Jacob in tel-

^a Gen. ix. 21—23.

^c Gen. xxi. 9.

^b Gen. xvi. 4—6.

^d Gal. iv. 29.

ling a lie to his father, in order to procure the blessing. But how remarkable is the retribution of Providence, as related in the scripture-history ! He deceived his father, when his eyes were covered by the darkness of age.^a Laban deceived him, by means of the darkness of night.^b Jacob put on the raiment of Esau, in order to favour the deception.^c In like manner did his sons deceive him by means of Joseph's coat.^d

When the good kings of Judah are commended, it is still with a reserve as to what was reprehensible in their conduct ; and even the partial repentance of the wicked Ahab is recorded, as having occasioned a delay of the vengeance denounced.^e

Moses wrote the history of Israel primarily for the use of that nation. But he does not flatter their pride. He does not, like many other ancient writers, ascribe to them a very honourable, nay, a divine origin. He shews, that they were the immediate posterity of slaves, and that their most honourable progenitors had been merely pilgrims in a land that was not their own. He reminds them, that, at their solemn feasts, they were still to recollect, and humbly to acknowledge, the meanness of their national origin ; that they were to use this mortifying language, " A Syrian ready to perish was my father."^f

No human history can be compared with that of inspiration, in respect of impartiality. The base treachery and barbarous cruelty of the sons of Jacob to the Shechemites, was disgraceful to the name of Israel. Yet it is particularly recorded. What could give a more striking representation of the versatility, the ingratitude and rebellion of that people, than their making a golden calf, and worshipping it, so soon after God had executed judgment against all the gods of Egypt,^g and delivered them from their slavery in that land by such astonishing miracles ? Yet the historian does not cover the national shame. He particularly describes the activity of his brother Aaron in this shocking apostasy.^h

But what especially deserves our attention, is the impartiality of the sacred writers in recording their own infirmities, errors, and transgressions. Moses impartially narrates the various objections which his unbelief made to the divine call, and his presumption and obstinacy in adhering to them, notwithstanding all that God condescended to say in reply.ⁱ He transmits to posterity an account of the reason why he was not suffered to conduct Israel into the land of promise. He records his guilt in disobeying the divine command.^k Samuel, when describing his mission to the house of Jesse, to anoint a successor to Saul, honestly re-

^a Gen. xxvii. 1, 19.

^c Gen. xxvii. 15.

^e 1 Kings xxi. 27—29.

^g Exod. xii. 12.

ⁱ Exod. iii. 11—22 ; iv. 1—17.

^b Gen. xxix. 23, 25.

^d Gen. xxxvii. 23, 31.

^f Deut. xxvi. 5.

^h Exod. xxxiii. 1, &c.

^k Numb. xx. 8—12.

ates his mistake in judging of the object of the divine choice from the outward appearance, and the reproof that he received from God on this account.^a John the Divine mentions the great danger he was in of falling into idolatry, by worshipping an angel, and the check that he received from this heavenly messenger.^b I might mention a variety of instances of the same kind. But I enlarge not on this point, having treated of it elsewhere.^c

iv. The *dignity* of Sacred History constitutes another of its beauties. We have already considered that simplicity which characterizes the page of inspiration. It seeks no foreign ornaments. The writers do not comment or descant even on the most astonishing facts. They barely relate them. Although the style of Scripture surpasses every other in simplicity, it is unparalleled in dignity. Its dignity, indeed, eminently lies in its inimitable simplicity. The very language in which the history of creation is written, seems to participate of the majesty of the Creator. Even a heathen could give this testimony: "The legislator of the Jews, a man by no means to be despised, with this elevation of mind made known the power of God according to its dignity. For he thus speaks, in the very beginning of the book of his laws; *God said. What? Let light be, and it was; Let earth be, and it was.*"^d

There is another character of dignity impressed on the Sacred History. The writers of it do not go about to seek for attestations of the truth of what they relate, however extraordinary it be. They write as men fully assured of the truth of all that they declare. Such is their consciousness of veracity, that they discover no anxiety as to their own characters. They appeal not to others, with respect to their credibility as witnesses; even when, to ordinary writers, such an appeal might have seemed most necessary. They seem perfectly satisfied, that their characters should rest entirely on the truth of the doctrines and facts which they relate. They deign not to consider, or even to mention, the objections that unbelievers might make to the miracles which they record. They write with an air of authority, which could only arise from the fullest persuasion; and discover an elevation of mind totally unknown to those who are under the influence of their own spirits.

The same dignity appears in the choice of the *matter*. It has been justly observed by critics, that the dignity of historical writing is not preserved, if trivial and unimportant facts are admitted. Many events are recorded in scripture, and many circumstances are related, which, to a careless or prejudiced reader, may seem unimportant. But facts, which are comparatively of

^a 1 Sam. xvi. 6, 7.

^b Rev. xix. 10.

^c Alarm to Britain, or an Inquiry into the Causes of the Rapid Growth of Infidelity, p. 159—161, 167.

^d Longin. de Sublimitate, sect. ix.

little moment, become highly important by their connexion with those that are so, by reason of their typical meaning, or their usefulness in proving greater facts. The greatest events also are often seen to depend on the most minute circumstances.—The discord between Hagar and Sarah is of itself a matter of no great importance. But it assumes another aspect, when viewed as not merely a reproof to Abraham, but as making way for the declaration of a most important prophecy concerning the posterity of Hagar.^a The same fact was also of a typical nature. For we learn from the apostle Paul, that “these things are an allegory.”^b A fact is mentioned, in the history of the resurrection of our Saviour, which at first view may seem of very little consequence. We are informed, that when Peter and John went into the sepulchre, they saw “the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in “a place by itself.”^c Yet this fact, apparently so unimportant, afforded the clearest evidence that the body of Christ had not been carried off from the sepulchre, but that he had really risen from the dead. This great exactness plainly shewed, that every thing had been conducted with the greatest order and deliberation. Such an effect had this single consideration on one of these disciples, that he was fully satisfied of the truth of the resurrection. Therefore it is said, “He saw, and believed.”^d What did he see? Not his risen Lord. He saw only the memorials of his death, the clothes in which his dead body had been wrapped. But as these were left, and left in such perfect order, it was evident that the sepulchre had not been robbed: nor could a doubt remain, that Jesus had at the same time put off mortality and its badges.

v. *Unity* is justly reckoned a great beauty in historical writing. Without this a mass of facts may be collected; but they do not form one whole. In every good history, there is some principal object, to which all the events narrated have either a more immediate or a more remote relation. In this respect, the history of inspiration will not merely stand the test of comparison with the best human composure, but unspeakably excels all that the wisdom of ages has produced. It includes, indeed, a great variety of facts, which have no immediate connexion with each other. But all these, however various, have one general centre. They all respect the Saviour and his work. This leading object surpasses any that was ever proposed in profane history, as much as eternity surpasses time, the immortal soul the perishing body, or the work of God that which is merely human. The history of the corruption of our nature, and of the wickedness of man in a great diversity of lights, is ultimately meant to shew the necessity of a Saviour. This also is the principal end of the his-

^a Gen. xvi. 12.

^c John xx. 7.

^b Gal. iv. 24.

^d Ver. 8.

tory of the judgments of God recorded in Scripture. As it is evident that these have never really reformed men, we perceive the necessity of a divine operation. The history of other nations is introduced, because of its connexion with that of the church. When we read that of the Egyptians, of the Moabites, of the Ammonites, of the different nations of Canaan, of the Philistines, of the Syrians, and of the Babylonians, we must not consider it as an history in which we have no concern. For thus we become acquainted with the signal displays of divine power and love towards the church in former times, and with those deliverances that were merely figurative of a more glorious salvation. In this respect, the Bible is "the book of the wars of the LORD." We learn "what he did in the Red Sea, and in the brooks of Arnon."^a

vi. It is no inconsiderable beauty of Sacred History, that the lives of *good* men are given fully, whereas we have only a compendious view of those of the *wicked*. For this observation I am indebted to a writer, who, although an adherent to the Romish church, might, by that pious reverence for the Holy Scriptures which he uniformly displays, well extort a blush from many Protestant historians. I cannot so well illustrate the idea, as by transcribing his own words: "The Scripture," he says, "cuts off in few words the history of the ungodly, how great soever they were in the eyes of the world; and, on the other hand, dwells long upon the smallest actions of the righteous. The first book of Kings is the history of Samuel; the second that of David; the third and fourth of Solomon, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Elijah, Elisha, and Isaiah*. The wicked seem to be mentioned only with regret, by accident, and on purpose to be condemned. If we compare what is said of Nimrod, who built the two mighty cities of the world,^δ and founded the greatest empire that ever was in the universe, with what is reported of the first patriarchs, we know not why the very important facts, which must have rendered the life of that famous conqueror so particular, and given so much light and ornament to ancient history, should be past over with such rapidity, to dwell so long upon the minute and seemingly unnecessary circumstances of the life either of Abraham, or Jacob, which was still less illustrious than that of his grandfather. But God points out to us herein, how different his thoughts are from ours, in letting us see in the first what men admire and wish for, and in the others what he is well pleased with, and thinks worthy his approbation and our attention."^c

^a Numb. xxi. 14.

* According to this mode of designation, the two books of Samuel are viewed as the First and Second book of the Kings.

^δ Nineveh and Babylon.

^c Rollin's Belles Lettres, Book IV. Part II. chap. i. art. 2.

VII. "The Scripture," according to the observation of the same beautiful writer, "lays down *rules*, and prescribes *models* for all *ranks* and *conditions*. Kings and judges, rich and poor, husbands and wives, fathers and children, all find there the most "excellent instructions upon every branch of their duty."^a

VIII. The delineation of *characters* is one principal part of history. The mind is soon fatigued by a mere detail of facts. It wishes to become familiar with the persons who pass before it in review. One good historical portrait is more instructive than whole volumes of dry narrative. The sacred historian does not professedly draw the characters of the persons whom he describes. But often is the character perfectly seen by a single stroke of his pencil. Nothing can be more descriptive of the character of Pharaoh's chief butler, than these simple words: "Yet did not "the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him."^b The most laboured dissertation could not half so emphatically express his ingratitude, his insensibility, and the fatal influence of prosperity on his soul. How striking is that parenthesis, introduced in the history of one of the kings of Judah; "This *is that* "king Ahaz!"^c We could not have a more picturesque view of the character of Haman, than what his own language affords: "yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the "Jew sitting at the king's gate."^d

On the other hand, the characters of the just are often emphatically drawn in a few words. When it is said of Enoch, that he "walked with God,"^e we see at one glance his separation from the wicked world, the holiness of his conversation, and the spirituality of his mind, which rendered him fitter for being an inhabitant of heaven than of earth. We do not wonder that "he was "not," in the same sense in which it is also said, that "God took "him." For, long before his translation, "he was not," as to "the life of this world," or even as to the life of the generality of saints. How striking is the character given of Abraham! As if it were too little, that he should be called "the father of all them "that believe,"^f he is also called "the friend of God."^g In this single designation, we have a full view of the venerable patriarch; we have a compend of his whole history. It at once exhibits the almighty God entering into covenant with his creature, as a man with his friend; his infinite condescension in swearing to Abraham, because he loved him; his munificence, in not only giving him the whole of that land in which he was a stranger, but in assuring him of a far better inheritance; the astonishing familiarity to which he was admitted; and the wonderful proof of the confidence which God reposed in him, by revealing to him the secrets of his purpose. We at the same time see

^a Rollin's Belles Lettres, Book IV. Part II. chap. i. art. 2.

^b Gen. xl. 23.

^c 2 Chron. xxviii. 22.

^d Esther v. 13.

^e Gen. v. 24.

^f Rom. iv. 11.

^g James ii. 23.

Abraham's steady and implicit confidence in God ; his holy boldness in interceding with him ; and the evidence he gave of the sincerity of his friendship, by the extent and cheerfulness of his obedience.

ix. It is the province of history to give a true account of the *springs* of actions and events. It has been justly observed, that the historical writer should be well acquainted with human nature, and have an extensive political knowledge. Without the one, he cannot give a just view of the conduct of individuals ; without the other, he cannot rationally account for the revolutions of collective bodies. Often, however, the most acute uninspired writer can only guess at the secret springs of human conduct. But in the Holy Scriptures, they are certainly declared by him who "a-
" lone knoweth the hearts of the children of men," who "know-
" eth the secrets of the heart," and who is certainly acquainted with all those motives of action, which are not only hid from the world, but perhaps in a great measure imperceptible to the agent himself. Men, from natural ingenuity, joined with sufficient opportunity and application, may acquire an eminent degree of political knowledge. But how limited the knowledge of the most consummate earthly politician, compared with that of "the Governor among the nations !" Men talk of the balance of power. But who can truly know this, but he to whom alone "power be-
" longeth ;" who holds in his almighty hand a balance for weighing kings and kingdoms ; in whose eye they are often "found
" wanting," when no deficiency can be perceived by the dim eye of human discernment ? By him alone can the various relations of states and empires, in respect to each other, be truly discerned ; because he only knows the relation that each of them bears to his justice, and their appointed subserviency to the fulfilment of his pleasure. The scheme of divine government is too intricate for the wise men of this world. How often are they deceived in their estimates of the past, and their calculations with respect to the future ! With what contempt doth He, who manages the secret wheels of government, view their feeble conjectures ! How cutting his irony ! "Surely the princes of Zoan are fools, the
" counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish :
" how say ye unto Pharaoh, I am the son of the wise, the son of
" ancient kings ? Where are they ? where are thy wise men ?
" and let them tell thee now, and let them know what the Lord of
" hosts hath purposed upon Egypt."^a

x. The whole of this history is *useful*. As "all Scripture is
" given by inspiration of God," it is all profitable."^b What is true of the whole, must be equally true of every part of revelation. There is not a single portion of its history, which, if fairly viewed in its connexion and design, does not contain an important moral ;

^a Isa. xix. 11, 12.

^b 2 Tim. iii. 16.

while nothing superfluous is admitted, nor any thing to minister to vain curiosity. It has been often observed, that wisdom is the great end of history. It is meant to supply the want of experience, not merely in individuals, but in particular generations. Here we have the aggregate of human knowledge, as far as it is derived from experience. It is brought into a common stock, for the benefit of mankind in general; that the deficiency of one age may be supplied from the abundance of others, which have preceded it. With respect, then, to the end of all history, it may superlatively be said of that which bears the impress of inspiration, "Here is wisdom." For in the history of his word, the Lord "layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous."^a

XI. We may justly reckon it one of the beauties of Sacred History, that it furnishes *nothing* to *distract* the mind from that which is the great subject of revelation, and which is exhibited to us as demanding our principal attention. So prone is the mind to start aside from this, that we may well admire both the wisdom and the goodness of God, in withholding from us whatsoever might prove a temptation.

Some modern philosophers quarrel with revelation, because it does not contain a system of science, or perfectly agree, in its modes of expression, with that system which is generally adopted. But had it been formed on such a plan, it would still have been exposed to objection from some quarter. For the system of philosophy, which is adopted in one age, is rejected and ridiculed in another. There is no age, in which all, who claim the designation of philosophers, are agreed as to any one system. It was therefore most consistent with divine wisdom, to express the operations of nature, according to the common language of men. This was especially necessary, as the Scriptures were meant for mankind in general, of whom by far the greatest part are illiterate, and could not therefore have understood the language of Scripture, had it been widely different from that in common use. In this method, there is nothing more inconsistent with truth, than in that observed by the greatest philosophers. Does not every one of them speak, in the common style of the sun rising, and of the sun setting; although such expressions are diametrically opposite to his own system with respect to the universe?

It has been objected to the account given of the miracle recorded in the book of Joshua,^b with respect to the sun standing still, that it is repugnant to the known system of the heavens; and that, had the miracle really taken place, the motion of the earth, and not that of the sun, should have been suspended. It would satisfy any candid mind, although we could give no other reply, than that the miracle is expressed according to its apparent effect; and that there is no more impropriety in its being said, that the

^a Prov. ii. 7.

^b Josh. x. 12, 13.

sun *stood still*, than that he *goes down*. But it merits observation, that, bating the necessary accommodation of the phraseology to the common language of men, there is no passage in any ancient writer that harmonizes so well with what is called the *Copernican System*. For as both sun and moon had been above the horizon at this time, Joshua called upon both to stand still: "He said, in "the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou "Moon, in the valley of Ajalon." Now, as the moon could not be necessary to give light in the day-time, this language shews, not only that the effect was such as perfectly to correspond with the modern system concerning the heavenly bodies, but that Joshua was directed by the Spirit of God to call for a display of divine power, in terms consistent with the physical fact. For according to the received system, the sun could not have *stood still*, unless the moon had also *stayed*; that is, both must have seemed to do so, in consequence of the cessation of the diurnal motion of the earth.

The objection, however, which is made to revelation, that it is not sufficiently philosophical, is merely a branch of a far *weightier* objection, or a veil thrown over it. God, who discerns that the thoughts of man are vanity, well knows that the effect of human wisdom is to carry man farther away from Himself. It is undeniable, that the greatest part of those called philosophers, have been much more inclined to empty speculation, than to faith; far more disposed to seek fuel for their natural pride, than to endeavour to mortify it. But the revelation, with which God favours man, is adapted to his fallen nature, and is meant to humble him in his own eyes. Hence it contains nothing that can minister to the pride of his understanding. It represents him as "foolish "and ignorant, as "brutish in his knowledge," as ready to perish, and as needing supernatural illumination. It calls his attention to those things which belong to his eternal peace. It is given for this very end. It would therefore be inconsistent with the very design of revelation, did it supply man with new objects, to divert his attention from his principal concerns; from which almost every object around him, in consequence of his own depravity, tends to abstract his mind. This then is the true, the full objection against divine revelation, however much it may be veiled, or frittered away by human ingenuity. It stains the pride of human glory, by requiring that man should "deny himself," and not "lean to his own understanding."

SECTION III.

On the Advantages arising from the Historical Mode of Writing.

WE are now to inquire into the *special advantages* arising from this mode of writing.

1. By this means many important truths are made more level to the *Understanding*. The operations of our own minds are often of an abstract nature. We are therefore at a loss, not merely to describe, but to investigate them. If they respect divine things, the difficulty is greater, because of our natural darkness and stupidity.* How many Christians are bewildered in their apprehensions about saving faith! The nature of this grace, however, is not merely pointed out in the doctrine of revelation; it is also most clearly exemplified in the history. We can neither truly know what faith is, nor exercise it, unless it be given us from above. But he, from whom "every good and perfect gift cometh," compassionates our weakness, and employs the most suitable means for our instruction. We have a simple and beautiful representation of the nature of faith in the history of Abraham. We learn that God promised him a son in his old age, and that he credited the divine testimony. We perceive his faith

* "Civil History is properly the history of the human mind, the science of the heart, and the school of society. There are many people of merit, who set a greater value upon a good maxim, or a judicious saying, than upon a series of facts; and who will, at any time, rather choose to put into the hands of youth collections of morals, than historical facts. Their intention in this, is to form the judgment by the truths resulting from actions, rather than fill up young minds with battles, or other events, that seem not fit to convey any instruction. But be pleased to put the *Adages* of *Erasmus* in opposition to the history of *Alexander*, or of the Viscount *Turenne*: *Erasmus*, with his heavy quintessence of rules, maxims, and moral reflections, shall have nobody on his side.—They either will not peruse him at all, or they will yawn at reading him.—Nor is it enough, indeed, when you desire to improve minds, and render them fruitful, that the things you propose to them be good in themselves. They ought chiefly to be *level to*, and fit to make an impression on *men of the narrowest capacity*. Now, this is the peculiar prerogative of history. It enchants the reader, by offering to his reflections a chain of facts, which, although they have not the air of lessons, yet are the seeds of the best precepts, and, in reality, contain all the moral truths which the mind does herself extract from them in a much more beneficial manner. I own that a single word of Monsieur *Turenne* is sometimes more affecting and instructive than the recital of his battles. But the merit of that word, the value of the noble sentiment it expresses, is never felt completely, without the help of the *fact* that occasioned it. You may not only admire the calmness of mind, and good order that reign in all his battles, but reap much benefit likewise from the cautions that precede each glorious day, and the utility he derives from them. Great benefit may be reaped also from the very confessions he makes of his mistakes." Abbé de la Pluche's *Nature Displayed*, Vol. v. Dial. 13.

terminating on Him, who was to spring from him "according to the flesh," as that seed in whom alone he could be blessed. We see the necessary connexion of hope with faith, in his patient waiting for the fulfilment of the promise. We discern the distinguishing character of faith "of the operation of God," that the subject of it "against hope believes in hope." We find how faith and works necessarily co-operate; that although they have no connexion as to merit, they are inseparably connected with respect to evidence. From this history, we clearly see, that Abraham was justified, before he had done any works acceptable to God: but that works were afterwards required of him, as evidences of the sincerity of his faith, and of the truth of his justification.

The Apostle defines faith to be "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."^a But he does not stop here. He proceeds to give an account of this grace, as illustrated in the history of the saints, in a great variety of operations. Why does he observe this method; but because he well knew, by "the wisdom given him," that such an illustration from facts was far better adapted to the use of Christians in general, than the most accurate definition?

II. This method is peculiarly calculated for engaging the *Attention*. Unless the attention be engaged, truth cannot find its way to the understanding, nor make any impression on the heart.— Few minds are capable of giving the same attention to truth delivered abstractly, as when it assumes the form of history. Many can scarcely read any thing in another form. This may be partly owing to the present state of the soul. It is so intimately connected with matter, that it still wishes, if possible, to fix on a sensible object. But it must be principally ascribed to our depravity. Naked truth has not charms enow for the corrupt mind. Therefore it must assume the garb of character; and be endued with life and action. "Infinite wisdom," as a judicious writer observes, "instead of always employing plain maxims, or cold generalities, delights in making men discover the whole—some truths in a recital, and in the appearance of a matter of fact."^b Some may imagine, that it had been more desirable, if the great doctrines of revelation had been delivered in their order and connexion, without being interspersed with so much history. But while such accuse the wisdom of God, they discover their ignorance of man. For the Scripture is indeed far more beautiful, and far more adapted to general use, in that form which God hath given it, than if all the doctrines had been proposed in the form of a regular system. Facts are employed to awake, and to preserve the attention. These have doctrines mingled with them, that they may be profitable. The mind of the reader is relieved by the pleasing variety. He at the same

^a Heb. xi. 1.

^b Nature Displayed, Vol. v. Dial. 13.

time receives the best entertainment, and the most solid instruction. Precept and example are seen at once, in their beautiful relation, and in their mutual influence.

III. This manner of writing has a native tendency more powerfully to influence the *Affections*. These, in most instances, are the immediate springs of human action. Almost in every country, and in every age, fables or allegories have been employed, as more eligible means for communicating instruction than mere precepts or prohibitions. In this manner, have the wisest heathens endeavoured to recommend virtue, and to reprove vice. If mere fable has been reckoned so instructive, surely genuine history must be preferable in this respect.

When righteousness or wickedness appears in the form of character, it tends most powerfully to engage our affections. If our souls are not enslaved by sin, we take an interest in all that happens to a good man. We feel a sincere pleasure in his prosperity. We tremble for him in adversity. We enter into his various feelings, and make his particular situation our own. We rejoice when he rejoices : we weep when he weeps. On the other hand, the crimes of a wicked man excite our detestation. We are afraid lest he should "prosper in his way." We are grieved if he triumphs. While we pity the man, we admire the righteous judgment of God in his punishment as a transgressor. That heart must be nearly as obdurate as Saul's, which does not take a deep interest in the afflictions of the unoffending David. He must have an equal love to "the wages of unrighteousness" with Balaam, who does not rejoice in the disappointment of that specious hypocrite in his various attempts to curse Israel.

Many affirm that they are most affected by truth when exhibited in a tragic form ; that virtue makes most impression on their affections, when represented as struggling with adversity. If so, they have no occasion to seek to the theatre. In the Holy Scriptures, God himself hath erected a stage, on which the most striking tragedies are represented. Here, there is the greatest possible variety of characters ; and men of all ranks make their entrance. So very various are the representations, that virtue and vice are exhibited in every imaginable form. There is something suited to every spectator. No fictitious actors make their appearance here. Every character is real. The scenes have been all delineated by the pencil of truth. And they are scenes which truly tend to strike the mind of a rational being. Heaven in all its joys, and hell in all its terrors, terminate the prospect.

Are you instructed by seeing virtue struggling with adversity ? Attend to it, then, in the patience of Job, in the history of Jeremiah, and above all in the life and death of the Son of God. Here alone can you see spotless innocence triumphing over the most aggravated miseries.

iv. I need scarcely say, that truth, in an historic form, makes a far deeper impression on the *Memory*, than when communicated in a doctrinal manner. This power is so formed, as to take a firmer hold of facts, than of precepts. We see this every day with respect to children. When they cannot retain any abstract truth, they easily receive instruction in the form of history. Now, our condescending Father treats us as only older children. He communicates truth in that way which is most adapted to the imperfection of our faculties in this state of minority.

The Israelites were commanded to instruct their posterity, not merely as to doctrines, but facts. The fathers were to tell their children, what God had done, as well as what he had spoken.^a Some of their most solemn ordinances, as has been formerly seen, were instituted, for the express purpose of preserving the remembrance of facts. In like manner, the principal feast, under the New Testament, is appointed as a perpetual memorial of the greatest event that ever took place on the theatre of this world, the death of "the Prince of Life." "As often," says the great institutor, "as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew "the Lord's death, till he come."

v. This method tends in a special manner to strike the *Imagination*. This is the inventive power of the soul. Here, as in a prolific womb, the most of our thoughts receive their first formation. Hence are they at length ushered into light, and assume the form of external actions. This is, indeed, the leading faculty, which supplies matter for the judgment of the understanding, and for the choice or rejection of the will. This is that power of the soul, which has the most immediate connexion with objects of sense, and receives its impressions by means of our bodily organs. It is, therefore, of the greatest importance, that such objects be presented to it, as tend to make proper and useful impressions. In its natural state, it is under the power of vanity. Therefore the Gentiles are said to "walk in the vanity of their "minds," or imaginations, "having the understanding darkened."^b This vanity of the mind especially appears by its ardent pursuit of vain objects, and by its great instability. The natural darkness of the understanding is greatly increased by the habitual vanity of the imagination. Flying from spiritual objects, and eagerly pursuing those that correspond to its own vanity, it obscures the understanding with a multitude of ideas which bear this character, and which therefore tend to pervert its judgment.

As this power is changed by grace, God, in the external revelation he hath given us, is pleased to employ means which are adapted to its peculiar frame. He does not merely make use of considerations suited to the nature of the understanding, and motives which have a tendency to influence the will: he also exhibits

^a Psalm. xliv. 1—3 ; lxxviii. 4, 5.

^b Eph. iv. 17.

such objects as are most apt to impress the imagination, and exhibits them in such a way as is most likely to produce the deepest impression. Because this power of the soul is inferior to the understanding, and ought to submit to its decisions ; because it is of itself wild and ungovernable, and very subject to illusion ; many perhaps give it far less attention than it deserves, and may be apt to imagine that very little regard is paid to it in Scripture, or in gracious operation. But the more wild it is, the greater is the necessity of its being tamed. The more that it is subject to illusion, the greater is the occasion for supplying it with proper antidotes. Accordingly, to an attentive observer, it will be evident that a great part of Scripture is meant in a particular manner for the use of this faculty. Well knowing its propensity to catch at the most trivial things, he substitutes in their place those of the greatest moment. As it is capable of being affected by what is great and sublime, he holds up to its view, on the page of revelation, events which are far more calculated to astonish, by their grandeur, than any that are recorded in profane history. Those great and stupendous works, which we call miracles, were immediately addressed by God to the senses of carnal men, that by means of them they might be excited to attention, and have the most convincing evidence of his presence, power, and greatness. Did the Supreme Being stoop so low ; and needs it seem surprising that he should also adapt himself to that mental faculty, which, as we have seen, has the most intimate connexion with objects of sense ?

Is the imagination naturally unstable ? He, in some degree, condescends to its weakness in this respect, by presenting it with a pleasing variety ; while he at the same time arrests its attention, by the magnitude, and by the connexion of the various events. Is this power, in its state of imperfection, subject to such impressions as produce fear, and thence very apt to embrace superstitious ideas ? He indeed exhibits such objects as tend to excite fear ; but that fear which is “ the beginning of wisdom,” and which is inseparably connected with true religion. Thus, although the whole efficacy depends on the *drawing* of his Spirit, he even externally “ draws,” in a variety of respects, “ with cords of a man”^a How much soever, indeed, the mind may be struck by any thing in revelation, it can have no saving effect, unless it be received by faith, resting on a divine testimony. For without this, there can be no genuine reception, or right understanding even of the historical parts of Scripture.^b But God may, thus work on the imagination, before he communicate faith, as a mean of exciting the attention to spiritual objects. When he hath given faith, he sanctifies this power as well as any other. This is one way in which the Holy Spirit operates in establishing the heart. He fills the mind with divine things, exhibited in the most striking light, and fixes it on these. Therefore David dis-

^a Hos. xi. 4.

^b Heb. xi. 3.

covers his knowledge, both of the heart of man, and of the gracious operation of God, when, in reference to the solemn offering that he and Israel had made of their substance to the great Giver, he presents this supplication ; “ *Keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare,*” or “ *stablish their heart unto thee.*”^a

Whether we consider the *matter*, or the *form* of Sacred History, we shall find that it is admirably adapted for impressing the imagination.

With respect to the *matter*, we may take the history of the Deluge for an example. No abstract description of the evil or desert of sin could be equally striking. We are not merely informed of the corruption of the *ways* or conduct of men, but of the universality of this corruption. “ All flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.”^b This depravity extended not only to all men, but to all that is in man. His heart was corrupted, as well as his way. Nor was this depravity fancied and complained of by some visionary and melancholy men, who viewed every thing in the worst light ; or by a few self-righteous persons, who wished to extol themselves at the expense of all around them. Nor, as extending to the soul, was it merely of a partial nature. We have the testimony of the Searcher of hearts, of the infallible Judge of the universe, both as to its reality and its extent. “ God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”^c This evil is attributed to every figment of the heart ; to all its first actings, purposes, or desires. Here the mind has a portrait presented to its view ; a portrait of itself, drawn by the finger of God, which may well produce astonishment and self-abhorrence !

God claims it as an essential property, necessarily flowing from the independence and immutability of his nature, that he cannot repent : “ I am JEHOVAH, I change not.”^d But more energetically to express his infinite hatred of sin, and the astonishing change of his conduct in consequence of this hatred, he speaks of himself as if he had been agitated by the distressful feelings of a mortal creature : “ It repented JEHOVAH that he had made man on the earth.” He uses no such language concerning any other creature that he had made. God is essentially “ blessed for ever.” But, with the same design, he represents himself as if he had been affected by that keen anguish of heart to which sinful man is subjected :—“ and it grieved him at his heart.”^e What an affecting picture of the evil of sin ! It caused *him* to repent, who is not “ the son of man, that he should repent.” It “ grieved *him* at his heart,” whose felicity is absolutely independent.

^a 1 Chron. xxix. 18.

^c Gen. vi. 5.

^b Gen. vi. 12.

^d Mal. iii. 6.

^e Gen. vi. 6.

The awful determination of God with respect to the destruction of man is also declared : " And the LORD said, I will destroy " man." Was this a creature who had been thrust in upon God's earth by an enemy to his glory ? No. He was God's own creature ;—" man, whom I have created ;" and created with such divine pomp and majesty. He had created him on the earth, and given this as his dominion. Now he says, " I will destroy," literally " blot man out from the face of the earth."^a The destruction is to be so general and complete, that those who survive can scarcely be mentioned as an exception ; and they can survive only by being exiles " from the face of the earth," by being lifted up towards that heaven, whence alone their protection can come.

But this destruction is not confined to man. It is extended to the irrational and the inanimate creation, to the earth itself and all its inhabitants. " The LORD said, I will destroy—both man and " beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air : for it " repenteth me that I have made them."^b—" Behold, I will destroy " them with the earth."^c Why are these innocent creatures involved in the same punishment with guilty man ? Although he failed to answer the end of his creation, had not they answered theirs ? They had been in part prevented from doing so by his apostacy. They had been " made subject to vanity ;"^d and converted into " instruments of unrighteousness." Even the good creatures of God had thus been made the " ministers of sin." He therefore speaks as if he looked back on their formation with regret : " It repenteth me that I have made them." The earth had been given to man as his possession ; and the inferior creatures as his subjects. By sin he had forfeited his right to both. As in other instances recorded in Scripture, the goods of the transgressor perish with him.^e When it is said, " that the " earth was corrupt before God,"^f the language can only be understood, in strict propriety, of its inhabitants. But this strong metaphor is used, in conformity to the context, to express that sin is so abominable in the eye of Infinite Purity, that he views the earth itself as if it were " defiled under the inhabitants thereof ;"^g as if it were unworthy to be acknowledged as his footstool, till it be cleansed by a flood of waters.

In this history we have an affecting representation of the hardening effect of sin. We see the whole world under the power of obduracy. Noah doubtless proclaimed the divine purpose, made known to him by revelation. Had he not done so, it could not have been said with propriety, that by the " preparing of an " ark for the saving of his house," he " condemned the world."^h But with what indifference are the awful tidings received ! Neither the predictions of Enoch, nor the warnings of Noah, have any effect. The fears of the generation are nowise alarmed ;

^a Gen. vi. 7.

^d Rom. viii. 20.

^f Gen. vi. 11.

^b Ibid.

^e Numb. xvi. 32, ;

^g Isa. xxiv. 5.

^c Ver. 13.

^h Josh. vii. 15, 24.

^h Heb. xi. 7.

though they see the full persuasion which "that righteous person" has of the truth of his doctrine, exemplified in his practice. We do not read of so much as a single convert. There is every reason to suppose, that his fear was the object of universal ridicule. "They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away."^a We have no evidence that any one, without the extent of his own family, used any preparatory means for preservation, or made application to him.

We see the very brutes proclaiming the folly of rational creatures, and giving a new warning to them, by fleeing from that earth which sin had defiled and their Maker had deserted. We see the whole of nature rising up in God's quarrel; the heavens and the earth conspiring for the destruction of rebellious men. While the earth sinks under the load, the heavens pursue them from above.

There is something very awful in the gradual nature of their destruction. It rained "forty days and forty nights upon the earth."^b After this, the waters were increased, and bare up the ark." We are informed in succession, that they "prevailed," that they "increased greatly," and that "they prevailed exceedingly, till all the high mountains, that were under the whole heaven, were covered."^c God could easily have destroyed the world in a moment; or he could have brought this destruction by water far more speedily upon them. But it was his pleasure, that those, who had sinned so long on this earth, should have their punishment prolonged on it; that, as its productions had been their idols, they should live to see them perish. Those who would not be reclaimed by God's gracious calls, now become involuntary witnesses of the slow but certain approach of his judgments. They had long despised an offered salvation; now, for a considerable time, they see the awful advances of inevitable destruction. There would most probably be a progress in the means employed by them for obtaining deliverance, bearing some analogy to the progressive nature of the calamity. While they might suppose that the inundation would be only partial, they would seek protection on the roofs of their houses. Thence they would flee to rising grounds; and, as the waters prevailed, ascend still higher and higher, till they reached the summits of the loftiest mountains; still vainly hoping for deliverance.

Thus, they supply us with a striking picture of the vanity of all those refuges to which guilty sinners naturally betake themselves, while rejecting the only true refuge; of what is often the case, their being driven from one to another, till they are at length overtaken by remediless destruction. Protection could be no where found but in that contemptible ark, which had been so

^a Mat. xxiv. 38, 39.

^b Gen. vii. 17.

^c Gen. vii. 18, 19.

long the laughing stock of unbelievers. Such is the destructive nature of sin, that every one perishes, who is not hid in the ark of God's church, who does not listen to the true Noah, and come in to him by faith, becoming an heir of his righteousness."^a

I shall only add on this branch, that God seems to have suffered the deluge to continue much longer than was necessary for the destruction of every living thing, that the whole face of nature might be changed. He was not only to destroy man and beast, but "to destroy them *with the earth*." We, therefore, see him inscribing on the earth, with his own almighty hand, the impress of his curse, in characters so deep and full, that they should be abundantly legible to every succeeding generation.

The *form or order* of Sacred History, corresponding with the connexion of the events, is often nearly as striking as its *matter*. This history commences with an account of creation. Here we see the Omnipotent with the greatest solemnity calling nothing into existence; creating this lower world, and adapting it for the reception of man; nay, casting the whole universe into such a mould, as to be most subservient to his use; forming the sun to rule by day, and the moon by night. We see him amply furnishing this earth with inferior creatures, both animate and inanimate. With still greater solemnity does he give being to that creature, for whom he had already so liberally provided. For the formation of all the other creatures, he had merely interposed his word. But here his word precedes the formation. Formerly, "he spake, and it was done;" here he speaks to declare the peculiar manner in which this work should be done. "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." He is exhibited as giving existence to all his other creatures by a word. Man appears as if he were more immediately the work of his hands: "The Lord God formed man."^b To put the greater honour on this creature, his creation is represented as consisting of two acts; the one respecting his body, the other his soul. Heaven and earth seem both to concentrate in the formation of this more noble creature. While his body is moulded of the dust of the ground, he receives his soul by immediate inspiration from his Maker.

When man is thus formed, his beneficent Creator constitutes him lord of all the lower world, giving him the use of every thing that it contains but one, which he reserves in his own hand, as a token of his rightful supremacy. In a word, to express the perfection of his works, the delight he hath in them, and the apparent impossibility that there should be any necessity of a renewed operation, he solemnly pronounces them to be "all very good;" and on the seventh day rests from all his work, and consecrates it as a day of sacred rest, in commemoration of his.

^a Heb. xi. 7.

^b Gen. ii. 7.

But, what an astonishing reverse ! This rest is immediately succeeded, if not interrupted, by the rebellion of that very creature whom he had so highly honoured ; by a daring attempt to rival his Maker ; by the loss of the divine image ; by an affecting sense of guilt ; and by the most consummate misery !

It might be supposed, that, if any thing would reclaim man from his apostacy, a discovery of the pardoning mercy of his offended Sovereign would have this effect. Accordingly, no sooner has man rebelled than God proclaims forgiveness, promising a seed who should bruise the head of the serpent, or destroy the works of the devil. But neither the denunciation of the curse, nor the declaration of the blessing, can of itself wean man from sin. When we advance another step, we perceive the total degeneracy of that nature which seemed so peculiarly the object of divine attention. We find the path of the first man born of woman, whom, indeed, she seems at first to have taken for the promised Deliverer, marked with the blood of his own brother.

In the compendious account that we have of the antediluvian Patriarchs, we may be struck with the idea of their longevity. But there is a circumstance, which is undoubtedly meant still more to arrest our attention. The account of each of them, one excepted, is closed with these words ; “ And he died.” This is no “ vain repetition.” The same thing would not be so frequently mentioned by the sacred historian, especially where the narrative is so concise, were it not meant to have peculiar emphasis. Thus, we see “ death reigning from Adam to” Noah ; and at length reaching those who were the longest exempted from its stroke. This is, in short, an history of the curse. Here we see its regular succession. We perceive its natural effect in temporal death, even on those who were delivered from its power.

In a little, we see the whole world filled with violence and corruption. The supreme Lord again appears upon the stage. He speaks as if he had “ made all men in vain.” He who said, “ Let us make man,” now said, “ I will destroy man whom I have created.”

As the matter of this part of Sacred History is very striking, so also is its *order* or *connexion*.

We have first an account of the multiplication of men upon the earth.^a But, as has been generally the case ever since, iniquity increased with them. We are particularly informed of the first great defection of the seed of Seth. They mingled with the world “ lying in the wicked one.” “ The sons of God,” or the professors of the true religion, “ saw the daughters of men,” the posterity of Cain, who had no other image than that of the first man, the earthy Adam ; “ and they took unto them wives of all “ which they chose.”^b An intimate connexion with “ the children

^a Gen. vi. 1.

^b Ver. 2.

"of this generation," especially by marriage, has in every age of the church been marked as a procuring cause of the displeasure of God, and been carefully avoided by his faithful servants.^a If any of them have acted otherwise, it has been to their hurt.^b

When men were thus determined to mingle themselves with the profane world, God ceased to contend with them by the common operations of his Spirit. "And the LORD said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man." For what reason?—"for that he also is flesh;"^c the professors of the true religion, as well as the idolatrous posterity of Cain, are carnal men. This judgment, although only of a spiritual kind, was, in fact, far more severe than many temporal calamities, which make a deeper impression, as affecting the senses: and, as in this instance, it is generally the forerunner of temporal destruction.

To illustrate the justice of God in punishing, to shew that there was no reason to expect a reformation, and to teach us the course we ought to observe with respect to all outward sins; "the wickedness of man in the earth," that is, his practical wickedness, is traced to his heart.^d It is not till the great Revealer hath thus proclaimed the extent and malignity of human corruption, that he declares his awful purpose to "destroy man from the face of the earth."^e

But we observe a display of mercy even in the midst of wrath. "Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD."^f But why is this man exempted from the general destruction of the human race? "Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations." He was not absolutely perfect; but perfect, compared with that generation. "And Noah walked with God."^g What a striking contrast between the way that Noah chose, and that of the rest of mankind! "All flesh had corrupted his way."^h We read only of another person to whom this character is given. Both receive signal marks of divine approbation. Enoch is translated to heaven. Noah is lifted above this earth, and survives its destruction. No abstract reasoning, in favour of a blameless and spiritual deportment, can have equal force with this simple narrative.

Notwithstanding the greatness of human corruption, and its universal prevalence, we have a wonderful display of divine forbearance. "The long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noe, while the ark was a preparing."ⁱ This was for no shorter a period than a hundred and twenty years. To this period did he now restrict the life of man. Yet so unwilling is he to punish, that he gave the respite of a long life to those very men who had already lived so long in rebellion. He allowed them a longer time

^a Gen. xxiv. 3—6.; xxvi. 34, 35.; xxviii. 2.

^b Exod. iv. 24—26.; 1 Kings xi. 4.

^c Gen. vi. 3.

^d Ver. 5.

^e Ver. 7.

^f Ver. 8.

^g Ver. 9.

^h Ver. 11.

ⁱ 1 Pet. iii. 20.

for repentance, than he was to allow the generality of Noah's posterity for living. During all this time did Noah act the part of "a preacher of righteousness."^a

I shall only further observe, that when Noah had finished his testimony, the beasts, birds and creeping things, give theirs, by making a spontaneous and public entrance into the ark.

VI. The historical mode of instruction brings its subject, whether it be sin or duty, *nearer* to the reader, than the bare precept. We see not only what we should, but what we may do. From the precept, we learn what ought to be done. In the history of the saints, we see the action itself. It lives and speaks. It silences all our vain excuses, from the imperfection of human nature, or from the peculiar difficulty of the service. It not only exhibits the action, but the strength : and when we turn our eye to the promise, we discern, that this is as really ours, in the free and unlimited exhibition, as it was Abraham's, or Jacob's, or David's ; and that we are equally welcome to embrace it for supplying our spiritual wants. We often learn, from the history itself, that a promise, primarily made to an individual, was by no means restricted to him ; but that it is successive and permanent, as really directed to all who have a call to similar duty, nay, a call, although of an ordinary kind, to any duty. Thus, the LORD said to Joshua ; " As I was with Moses, so I " will be with thee : I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."^b—From the application made of this promise to the Hebrews, we learn that all are welcome to believe and plead it, to whom it is externally directed, whatever be the peculiar nature of their necessities, whether they be spiritual or temporal. " Let your conversation be without covetousness ; and be content with such " things as ye have : for he hath said, I will never leave thee, " nor forsake thee."^c

The history of Enoch is a far more striking lesson of the beauty of holiness, than any bare precept could have been. We naturally extend our minds to the contemplation of the various branches of that spiritual conduct, so emphatically called *walking with God*. We perceive the possibility of attaining, by the power of divine grace, an eminent degree of spirituality, from the history of this patriarch ;—of faith, from that of Abraham ;—of meekness, from that of Moses ;—of patience, from that of Job. The example of worthy progenitors has, in every age, been considered as a peculiar excitement to their posterity. This mode of writing must have had an eminent tendency to affect those who were the literal descendants of the patriarchs. It is with this view, doubtless, that God, who is perfectly acquainted with all the springs of human action, so often reminds his ancient people of their relation to persons who were so truly illustrious. He ex-

^a 2 Pet. ii. 7.

^b Josh. i. 5.

^c Heb. xiii. 5.

cites them to the same conduct, by honouring them with their very names. Can any language be more engaging than that? "Thou Israel art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham, my friend. *Thou* whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof."^a

Nothing can be added, in point of authority, to these precepts, "Thou shalt not kill;—Thou shalt not commit adultery." But the language of the law does not affect the mind with such horror at these crimes, as when we see them exemplified in the conduct of David. There they appear with all possible aggravation. We are also struck with the connexion between the one crime and the other; and more clearly perceive the hardening nature of sin in general.

He, who views these great iniquities as forbidden in the precept, may think that he is in no danger whatsoever of committing them. He sees them, perhaps, as at a great distance. But let him turn his eye to this highly-favoured prince, and the distance may not seem so great. How often hast thou been idly and unseasonably gadding or gazing about, and thus thrown thyself in the way of temptation?^b Hast thou never, in such circumstances, "looked upon a woman to lust after her?" If thou hast done so, "thou hast committed adultery with her already in thy heart."^c Nothing perhaps has been wanting on thy part, to the completion of this crime, but opportunity. Or, nothing might have restrained thee, but the want of that power which David possessed. Hadst thou, like him, had the strong temptation of arbitrary power, some Bathsheba might long ere now have become a prey to thy lust.

But although it may be impossible for thee to exculpate thyself from the charge of impure inclinations; "Murder," mayest thou say, "is so shocking a crime, that the idea of it never once entered into my heart." But hast thou never covered one sin by another? Hast thou never told a lie, in order to conceal a previous transgression? This is the natural progress of iniquity. No man is completely wicked at first. When David defiled Bathsheba, he had no more idea of murder than thou mayest have. He tried a variety of other methods for concealing his crime. He sent for Uriah from the siege of Rabbah, under pretence of learning by him how the war succeeded. He commanded him to go and lodge at his own house. The hardy soul of this faithful servant would not deign to accept of this indulgence, while "the ark, and Israel, and Judah abode in tents." He "slept at the door of the king's house, with all the servants of his lord." When challenged for his conduct by David, he solemnly swore that he would not go down to his

^a Isa. xli. 8, 9.

^b 2 Sam. xi. 2.

^c Matt. v. 28.

own house. But David tried another plan. He called Uriah, caused him to "eat and drink before him, and made him drunk." Yet Uriah still persisted in his resolution. As far as appears from the history, it was not till David saw every other method of covering his sin frustrated, that he entertained the horrid design of having Uriah given up to the slaughter; and thus of taking Bathsheba to wife, that he might throw the veil of marriage over the fruit of adultery. How fitly does this portion of Sacred History illustrate the propriety of that precept; "Take heed, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." So much was the conscience of David hardened by his aggravated guilt, that for nearly a year he remained a stranger to genuine repentance.

VII. Instruction, conveyed in the form of history, *carries conviction* to the mind, *without seeming* to do it. When truth is communicated in a doctrinal form, the heart, under the power of sin, endeavours to fortify itself against any impression, in consequence of being forewarned of its unwelcome approach. But, in the path of history, this precious monitor steals in upon the mind, and gets hold of it imperceptibly. The reader is led on, step by step, till he is under a necessity of giving an assent which he would very probably have withheld, had that been laid down as a first principle, which forces itself upon him as a native conclusion.

Facts, indeed, afford the most convincing display of human corruption. Man is so partial to himself, that he is extremely unwilling to admit that human nature is so depraved as it really is. Therefore, he exerts himself to the utmost, to explain away the genuine sense of doctrinal assertions. But he finds it more difficult to resist the evidence of facts. He may deny the inference to be a principle universally applicable. But he is under a necessity of admitting it, in all its extent, as to a multitude of individuals. Even thus, a great point is gained. For if it be evident that some individuals, who have gone the greatest lengths in sin, could not have been tainted by the influence of example; it would seem to require a great struggle with reason, to refuse that they were born with a principle of corruption. If this be admitted as to a single person, it will be impossible to assign a satisfying reason, why it should be the case with him, and not with all mankind.

It might seem incredible, that the heart of man were capable of so great a degree of obduracy, had we not the history of Pharaoh so minutely recorded. But we learn from this affecting instance, that the most faithful warnings, followed up by incontestable displays of divine power, to the conviction of the sinner himself, that even a series of the most tremendous judgments, will only have a transient effect on that heart, from which God is pleased to withhold his grace; that, instead of being broken un-

der a sense of guilt, the person will become more obdurate, and more daring in the practice of iniquity.^a

The most elaborate dissertation on the hateful character of malice, cannot exhibit it in so striking a light as the history of David's persecution from Saul. The only ground of offence against David, was that "the Lord was with *him*, and had departed from "Saul."^b How many snares did he lay for the life of David? How often did he attempt to be himself his executioner? Did he not seek to murder his own son, because he asked the reason of his wrath against David? Did he not actually destroy fourscore and five priests, with all the inhabitants of their city, because one of them only had supplied David with bread, when he and his men were ready to perish with hunger; and when Ahimelech, although he had been so disposed, must have known that he could make no resistance to a band of armed men? For how many years did Saul continue this cruel persecution? Into how many forms did he vary it? And did he not display all this malice against David, although David repeatedly spared him, even when instigated by his companions to take away his life, when apparently his own safety required this sacrifice; although he knew, that David was anointed to be king, by the very same authority by which he had himself been anointed, and afterwards rejected; although he knew that David would "surely be king, and that the kingdom of "Israel would be established in his hand;"^c although obliged, on different occasions, to acknowledge that he had sinned, and that David was more righteous than he?^d

The hardening effect of revenge remarkably appears in the history of Jezebel. The imposture of her pretended prophets, and the divine mission of Elijah, had been miraculously manifested, in consequence of an immediate appeal to God, by fire from heaven; and afterwards, by an abundance of rain, in answer to the prayers of Elijah, after an uninterrupted drought of more than three years duration. Yet, because he procured the destruction of the prophets of Baal, Jezebel sent him this message; "So let "the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as "the life of one of them, by to-morrow about this time."^e

Pride is a great barrier against instruction. How many are there who will receive instruction, when communicated in the third person, who would spurn at it, if immediately addressed to them in the second! On this principle did the prophet Nathan proceed, when the Lord sent him to David, to awake in his conscience a sense of guilt with respect to his great trespass.^f The prophet, most probably directed by the Spirit of God as to the very manner of addressing the king, delivered his message, at first instance, in a parabolical form; as if he had been relating a

^a Exod. ix. 34.

^b 1 Sam. xviii. 12.

^c 1 Sam. xxiv. 20.

^d Ver. 17. chap. xxvi. 25, 26.

^e 1 Kings xviii. 21.—46; xix. 2.

^f 2 Sam. xii. 1—14.

recent fact, which did not otherwise respect David, than as being subject to his judicial cognisance. In such glowing colours did he paint the crime, that without the least hesitation the king gave judgment against "the man that had done this thing," that he "should surely die." He was filled with horror and indignation at his own crime, when he viewed it as that of another, although exhibited in a diminished form. His "anger was greatly kindled against the man." While he seemed only to condemn another, he passed sentence on himself. His own judgment made way for the prophet's particular application of the parable, in that plain and energetic language, "Thou art the 'man!'" The heart of David was greatly hardened; and, as we have seen, had been long in this situation. But without immediately calling into account the operation of the Spirit of grace, as we presently restrict our attention to means; it was scarcely possible for David to resist the force of conviction, even in a natural point of view. It rushes on him like a thunderbolt. No time is left for the operations of deceit, in setting aside the charge. Out of his own mouth is he already condemned. All that remains, therefore, for the prophet, is to shew the full application of the parable in David's case; to exhibit his guilt in all its aggravations, as greatly surpassing that of the fictitious person concerning whom he had given judgment; to declare the commission he had from God, and thus to endeavour to impress David's conscience with a sense of the divine authority; and to denounce judgments against his house.

To a careless reader, the sacred historian seems to have no particular design in the manner in which he relates the origin of some of the most celebrated heathen nations, or introduces their founders. The circumstances referring to these appear to be mentioned merely by the way. They may even seem to have no immediate connexion with the general texture of the history. But when we attentively consider the whole frame and the uniform design of this history, these very parts, which at first strike us as least coherent, carry the most evident impress of wisdom worthy of God. Some of the heathen nations were distinguished for pride. They in general poured contempt on the worshippers of the true God. Even that people, to whom God had given his statutes and judgments, discovered a constant propensity to imitate the manners, and to adopt the idolatrous worship of the surrounding nations. To repress the pride of the former, and to correct the folly of the latter, the sacred historian occasionally drops the most striking hints with respect to the despicable origin, both of those nations, and of their religion. Thus he shews the mean source not only of the Egyptians themselves, but of their worship. They were the posterity of the wicked Ham, who was worshipped under the name of Hammon.^a The Israelites, instead of being allured by the obscene rites of the Mo-

^a Gen. x. 6.

abites, might well have felt a double abhorrence at them ; as not only the very reverse of those pure ordinances, commanded by God, but as bearing, in his righteous judgment, a striking impress of the horrid impurity of their origin as a people.^a In the history of the Patriarch Noah, we have a particular account of the curse which he pronounced, especially as affecting the race of Canaan.^b We do not perceive the reason of this from the immediate connexion. But we see the propriety, when we afterwards learn, that the country first possessed by the posterity of Canaan was to be given to the sons of Abraham, and that its inhabitants were devoted to destruction. We remark, that this part of Noah's history was meant to convey the most important instruction to the Israelites, for whose use it was more immediately written. It taught them, that they had no reason to be afraid of the Canaanites, notwithstanding the greatness of their stature, or the number of their fenced cities ; because they were a race whom God had cursed. It also warned them against the impiety of imitating their idolatrous worship, or of intermarrying with them. For what fellowship could there be between the miserable objects of the curse of God, and those whom he had blessed ? How is the pride of Babylon stained, by the account given of her origin ! The foundations of that city, which gave its name to the kingdom, were laid in pride, presumption, and virtual rebellion against God.^c The character of Nimrod, its first sovereign, seems to correspond to his name, which signifies *a rebel*. It is said that " he was a mighty hunter before the LORD."^d This language is generally, and we apprehend most naturally, understood in a bad sense ; as denoting that he was a great tyrant and persecutor, one who hunted men. He was a hunter of men, in open contempt and defiance of JEHOVAH. In this sense is the same language elsewhere used in Scripture.^e To this metaphorical signification the expression seems to be restricted by what immediately follows : " And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel." If, as many learned writers suppose,^f Nimrod was the same with Belus, the great god of the Chaldeans ; what a contemptible view is given of the object of their worship !

VIII. By means of history, truth appears attested by *experience*. This is one great source of knowledge to the human mind. Experience, it is proverbially said, " is the best teacher." Hence, indeed, in the common affairs of life, the generality of mankind derive the greatest part of their knowledge. They have little time for reading. They are not much accustomed to reflection. Even what they learn from reflection, must be traced to experience as its principal source. They compare the various facts they have observed, and thence deduce certain principles. Now, what is history, but an authentic record of the experience of in-

^a Numb. xxv. 1, 3. comp. with Gen. xlx. 36—38. ^b Gen. ix. 22—26.

^c Gen. xi. 4—9.

^d Gen. x. 9.

^e See Jer. xvi. 16 ; Lam. iv. 18.

^f Bechart. Phaleg. 264, 478.

dividuals, or of collective bodies ? What is the history of Scripture, but the aggregate of the experience of mankind since the world had a being ?

It must be admitted, that the bulk of men derive little advantage from experience, unless it be personal. Almost every individual must buy it for himself. Where is the nation, or the age, that will take the benefit of the experience of other nations, or of former ages ? But this is the folly of our nature. When God is pleased to supply us with so ample a store of experience, he communicates knowledge in such a way as peculiarly to recommend it to our attention. If we refuse to profit by it, we can never complain of the want of means.

The experience of the Church is more nearly allied to personal experience, than any other. It is not the experience of individuals, unconnected with each other, but that of one body. It is not like the experience of political societies, who are connected merely by proximity of situation, sameness of government, similarity of manners, or unity of interest. For, in a sense peculiar to herself, the Church is said to be one body. One member is connected, not merely with others presently on earth, but with all believers who have ever existed. They are all animated by one spirit. So intimate is their union, that if "one member suffer, all the members suffer with it ; or if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice."

ix. More particularly, in the Sacred History, we have a *successive evidence* of the truth of *revelation*, an evidence of the most obvious and irresistible kind. It is of a twofold nature, corresponding to the two great branches of this history. It arises from the lives both of the good and of the bad men, whose characters are here held up to view. This evidence is not less correspondent to the great design of revelation in general, which is also of a twofold nature ;—to give a just representation of man's ruin, and of his recovery.

It has been observed by the great Pascal, with respect to the conduct both of sceptics and of avowed infidels, that "their opposition is of so little danger, that it serves to illustrate the principal truths which our religion teaches ;" and that "these opposers, if they are of no use towards demonstrating the truth of our redemption, by the sanctity of their lives, yet are at least admirably useful in shewing the corruption of nature, by their unnatural sentiments and suggestions."^a

This remark, founded on observation, is abundantly verified by Scripture. It exhibits many wicked men, as giving an involuntary testimony to its truth. While they deny that human nature is so depraved as revelation represents it, or that it needs any such remedy as it discovers ; the sottishness and inconsistency

of their conduct clearly prove the truth of the one, and the necessity of the other. They cannot entirely exculpate themselves from the charge of guilt. They feel that they are exposed to many miseries. While they admit that their souls are immortal; they must be conscious that they are not absolutely secure against perdition. What course, then, do they take? Do they act in consonancy to such convictions as they have? Do they endeavour to provide the most proper means for their eternal safety? On the contrary, they adopt that brutish maxim; "Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die." We see Cain conscious of guilt and misery. Yet he does not present a single petition for mercy.^a Pharaoh confesses his sin, and earnestly entreats Moses and Aaron to pray for him. Yet after all, he obstinately continues in that very sin which he had confessed, and which, he was assured, had already subjected him to severe punishment.^b Jehu acknowledges the truth of the predictions of JEHOVAH by his servant Elijah. Yet he embraces the despicable worship of the calves at Dan and Bethel.^c Although his conduct should not be ascribed to ignorance, but to interest, it discovers the same stupidity. It shows that the soul must be dreadfully depraved, that can prefer the transient and uncertain interest of the present moment, to that which involves eternity. It displays the blinding influence of this depravity. For, while Jehu admitted that God had so severely punished the house of Ahab for idolatry, had he reasoned justly, he must have concluded that his only true interest, even with respect to security in his kingdom, was faithfully to serve him whom he acknowledged to be the true God.

The Pharisees, and their abettors, while they refused that they were "born in sin," or naturally under the power of mental blindness,^d demonstrated the truth of revelation, as far as it respects this important doctrine, by the shocking perverseness and irrationality of their reasonings, and by the gross inconsistency of their conduct with their convictions. Upon the strictest scrutiny, they found that it was impossible to deny that Jesus had opened the eyes of one who had been born blind. But they, with the most contemptible puerility, attempted to avoid the force of the argument, in behalf of his being the true Messiah, by pretending that they knew "not whence he was."^e On this point, indeed, the unbelieving Jews could reason any way, as it served their present purpose. For some of them said, on another occasion; "We know this man whence he is; but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is."^f At times, they ascribed his miracles to diabolical power; while they must have been convinced, that the devil would never do any thing toward the destruction of his own kingdom, which was evidently the direct tendency of the whole of Christ's doctrine and life. While there was nothing that they more anxiously wished, than that the

^a Gen. iv. 13—16.

^c 2 Kings ix. 25, 26, 36, 37; x. 31.

^e Ver. 16, 26, 29.

^b Exod. x. 16, 17, 20.

^d John ix. 34, 40, 41.

^f Chap. vii. 27.

Messiah should come and free them from the Roman yoke ; they argued, that if they " let him alone, all men would believe " on him ; and the Romans would come and take away both their place and nation."^a They must have been convinced of the self-contradiction contained in this reasoning. For if they knew that Jesus meant to erect a temporal kingdom ; the nation, in " believing on him," would only do what themselves so earnestly wished, and what, according to their principles, it was their indispensable duty to do. If, on the contrary, they were assured, that Jesus had no such design, that the kingdom he meant to erect was wholly of a spiritual nature, which was indeed the principal ground of their rejecting him ; they could not but be conscious, that the faith of the nation would give no offence to the Roman government, because it could expose it to no danger. They expected, that when Christ should come, he would be attested by miracles ; and they were convinced that Jesus " did " many miracles."^b Yet when his miracles seemed to become more numerous and splendid, and, according to their own acknowledgment, were absolutely incontestable ; so far from giving themselves any concern seriously to examine the proofs of his mission, or to bring their expectations concerning the Messiah to the test of revelation ; they resolved to be more diligent in seeking his destruction.^c To them the language of God by Jeremiah seems to be especially addressed. It is undoubtedly a prophecy expressive of the guilt and stupidity of those " masters of Israel" who rejected the true Messiah. " How do ye say, We " are wise, and the law of the LORD is with us ? Lo, certainly in vain made he it, the pen of the scribes is in vain.—Lo, they " have rejected the word of the LORD, and what wisdom is in " them ?"^d

Now, if we consider that self-preservation is the first principle of human nature, and that the preservation of the soul must appear to every thinking person to be of unspeakably greater moment than that of the body ; even on rational principles, it must seem impossible to account for the total indifference of some, who indulge themselves in pleasure and gaiety, without any concern for their souls ; and for the strange contradiction in the conduct of others, who act in diametrical opposition to their own convictions ; unless we admit, that the soul of man is as completely perverted by sin as revelation declares. It is otherwise inconceivable, that men should be entirely unconcerned about what they acknowledge to be an immortal principle ; or pursue such measures, as, if their convictions be just, must plunge them into everlasting destruction.

The truth of revelation, as it respects the recovery of lost man, is no less attested by the lives of the saints. In Scripture-history

^a John xi. 48.
^c Ver. 53.

^b Ver. 47.
^d Jer. viii. 8, 9.

we have the most ample and the most satisfying evidence of the power of divine grace. Many, who "by nature were children of wrath even as others;"^a who "were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another;"^b who were extortioners, or thieves, whoremongers or harlots, adulterers, murderers, blasphemers and persecutors, appear so wonderfully changed, as not only to abandon and detest those courses to which they were formerly addicted, but to live in such a manner as to glorify God, and prove a blessing to society. They do not appear as weak foolish men, who might be an easy prey to imposture or superstition, but as men of equal reason with others, nay, in various instances, distinguished by their natural powers, and by their acquired learning. They were not influenced by interest; but made choice of religion, knowing well, from the first, that they would be called to suffer the loss of all things which were naturally most dear to them;^c that instead of ease or pleasure, riches or honour, they must lay their account with labour and suffering, poverty and disgrace, and that, in all probability, they would be required to offer their lives as a sacrifice in the service of Christ, and of the gospel. We cannot justly consider them as hurried into a choice of this as their portion, by the surprise of the moment. They evidently prefer it to every other, in consequence of mature deliberation.^d Nor is there the least indication, that any of them, after a fair trial, repent of their choice.^e On the contrary, they still avow, that their bliss overbalances all their apparent misery; and, even in the most abject situation, prefer their portion to all the blandishments of life.^f

Thus, we have a striking display of the infinite *condescension* of God, in the plan of revelation. This he accommodates to the frame and necessities of men. He deals with us as rational creatures, although fallen. In what a variety of ways does he reveal himself! "I have spoken," says he, "by the prophets, and I multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets."^g He gives us not only "line upon line, precept upon precept," but example upon example, one important fact following another. When the great Prophet appeared in our nature, he most commonly delivered doctrine in the form of history. He often adopted the *parabolical* plan. Now, he exhibits himself as a sower, who throws his corn into grounds differently prepared; then, as the father of a family, who sends into his vineyard the labourers he finds upon the place, at several hours of the day. Sometimes, he instructs by the resemblance of a son reclaimed from a long course of prodigality; or by any similar

^a Eph. ii. 3.

^b Tit. iii. 3.

^c Phil. iii. 7.

^d Act ix. 16.; Heb. xi. 24—26.

^e Heb. xi. 15.

^f 2 Cor. i. 4, 5.; iv. 8, 9, 16.—18.; Acts xx. 23, 24.

^g Hos. xii. 10.

event, intelligible to men of all capacities, and calculated to invite them to unriddle the truth wrapt up in the similitude.^a

Christ's speaking in parables, proved to many obdurate hearers, through their own corruption, an occasion of greater blindness.^b But his great design in adopting this plan, was to convey instruction in the most plain and simple manner to the rude and ignorant. "With many parables spake he the word to them, as they were able to hear it."^c He made known heavenly things, by shadows borrowed from those that are earthly.^d He used this method also, in order to stir them up to a diligent search after divine truth. Therefore, when he delivered the parable of the sower, he concluded with this arousing call; "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."^e

Our Saviour often taught by *examples*. These differ from parables, as being parts of real history, while in the other there is only the resemblance of it. Thus, he defends the conduct of his disciples in plucking ears of corn on the Sabbath day, from the example of David eating the shew-bread.^f He aggravates the guilt of the Jewish nation, by appealing to the history of the repentance of Nineveh, and to the account given of the Queen of the South.^g

When he sent forth his apostles, the great work he assigned them was that of being witnesses of certain facts. These, indeed, were facts of the last importance. They were to be "witnesses of all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem."^h They were particularly to be witnesses of his resurrection.ⁱ

What is the Gospel itself, but the divine testimony concerning the greatest facts that were ever made known to men? Thus it is compendiously defined by a heavenly preacher: "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born—a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."^k The gospel is just the *news*, published by the authority of the King of heaven, concerning his wonderful works in behalf of the children of men.

We have no less reason to admire the infinite wisdom of God, displayed in giving such a form to revealed truth. How useful soever systems may be, for exhibiting a connected view of the truths of God, for setting the various arguments, in defence of particular doctrines, in the strongest light, and for giving them their combined force; the doctrines of revelation are far better adapted to general use, in that diversified form in which they have been communicated by the Spirit of God. Systems in general are directed solely to the understanding. But truth, in the

^a See Nature Displayed, *ubi sup.*

^c Mark iv. 33.

^f Mat. xii. 2—4.

ⁱ Acts i. 22; iv. 33.

^d John iii. 12.

^g Ver. 41, 42.

^b Luke viii. 10.

^e Mat. xiii. 9.

^h Acts x. 39.

^k Luke ii. 10, 11.

scriptural form, lays hold of all the avenues which lead to the heart. It is so variously disposed, as to be capable of touching every nerve of the soul.

I am far from meaning, that the word of revelation can accomplish this of itself. No one can derive any saving benefit from it, but in consequence of the efficacious working of the Spirit. But God, although infinitely powerful, manifests his wisdom in the general tenor of his operation, by the use of means; of means, in themselves naturally most adapted for producing the end. When he is pleased to work savingly, he employs these means according to their nature. When he opens the understanding, he employs such means as are most subservient to a communication of light. When he changes the will, he operates upon it in a manner suited to its natural frame. When he captivates the affections, he employs those alluring discoveries which the gospel presents.

How culpable are those who *overlook* the *history* of the Bible! Is it possible that any can habitually do so, from the idea that it is not spiritual enough for them? If so, they plainly shew the want of spirituality. Otherwise, they would know, that "whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope." By such neglect, we deprive ourselves of one eminent mean of an increase of *patience*. This is, the illustrious example of those who "through faith and patience do now inherit the promises." We remain strangers to that abundant source of *consolation*, which is opened in the experience of the saints. We lose some of the best means for increasing Christian *hope*. For this is greatly confirmed, by a consideration of the success of patience; and by a view of the various comforts, administered by the Spirit, to those who have waited on the LORD.

In a word, how inexcusable is the guilt, how great the obduracy of those, who *resist* such a variety of means, such a fulness of evidence! They may justly be compared to the unbelieving Jews, who continued to reject the gospel, although, in the circumstances of its publication, adapted to men of the most different humours, and even of dispositions directly contrary to each other. The language of Christ, concerning these Jews, may be justly applied to those who reject the gospel in our day. "Whereunto shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? They are like unto children sitting in the market-place, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced: we have mourned unto you, and ye have not wept. For John the Baptist came neither eating bread, nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold, a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But Wisdom is justified of all her children."

PART II.

ON THE

HISTORY OF ISRAEL.

THE history of ancient Israel forms an ample source of instruction to the Christian church. While we are assured that "whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning," this holds true with respect to the Israelites in a peculiar sense. It was the will of the all-wise God to give a national existence to this people, to cast them into such a mould, and to regulate every thing concerning them in such a manner, that they might prefigure that true Israel which he hath gathered out of "every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."—Thus, the names by which they were distinguished as a nation, are transferred to the New Testament Church. Were they called *Israel*, and *Judah*, and *the seed of Jacob*? These designations, in their highest and most proper sense, are appropriated to the church of Christ under the gospel. Concerning her it is foretold, as expressive of her blessedness under the government of the antitypical David; "In his days, Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely."^m "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory."ⁿ The spiritual kingdom of Christ is that "house of Jacob," over which he "shall reign for ever."^o Its true members are "the Israel of God," who are partakers of his "peace and mercy,"^p as contradistinguished from Israel after the flesh."^q In comparison with them, these peculiar names are denied to the literal posterity of Abraham. "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the

^m Jer. xxiii. 6.
^p Gal. vi. 16.

ⁿ Isa. xlv. 25.
^q 1 Cor. x. 18.

^o Luke i. 33.

"heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God."^r To shew that the church of Christ is the antitype of God's ancient people; her faithful members, in a time of general apostacy, are represented as an hundred and forty-four thousand, sealed out of the twelve tribes of Israel.^s For this very reason indeed, all the representations which are given of the true church of Christ, in the symbolical book of *Revelation*, are borrowed from the temple service, or from the history of the Old Testament Church.

Such characters were conferred on literal Israel, as were meant to have their full accomplishment only in the New Testament Church. Thus God said to his ancient people: "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people:—and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."^t In them we see a delineation of that peculiar people, who are not of the world, but are chosen out of it; ^u of those spiritual priests, who by Jesus Christ "offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually;" ^v of "them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints."^w The language, therefore, originally applied to literal Israel, is by the Holy Spirit transferred to them, as adopted instead of that carnal people, who "stumbled at the word, being disobedient." Hence it is said to the spiritual, as contradistinguished from the literal, Israel: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him, who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."^x

The typical character of this people appears from many other considerations. The divine conduct towards them was a striking figure of his conduct towards the New Testament Church. The matter of her faith and obedience, her mercies and judgments, are delineated in their history. A *type* properly signifies a more rude and imperfect expression of any thing, in order to a more accurate and complete delineation of it. In this respect the Israelites were types. In their constitution, as a society, partly political, and partly ecclesiastical, we have an image of the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah. In their privileges as church-members, we have a representation of the state of an heir, who, "as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all."^y Their ordinances are called "elements," or "rudiments of the world;" because they were of a carnal nature, and consisted of emblems borrowed from the things of this world, containing a dark representation of spiritual blessings, by means of which the church, in her infant state, was prepared for a clearer revelation, and a more full enjoyment of these bles-

^r Rom. ii. 23, 29.

^u John xi. 19.

^x 1 Pet. ii. 8, 9.

^s Rev. vii. 4.

^v Heb. xiii. 15.

^y Gal. iv. 1.

^t Exod. xix. 5, 6.

^w 1 Cor. i. 2.

sings. They are also denominated "weak and beggarly elements;"^z because the soul could derive no benefit from them, except in as far as they shadowed forth that "better thing which God hath provided for us." In this respect, God's ancient people "without us could not be made perfect."^a For the law had only "a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things."^b "The body is of Christ"^c The priests "served unto the example and shadow of heavenly things."^d The tabernacle, with its ordinances, "was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make them that did the service perfect, in things pertaining to the conscience."^e

The temporal mercies, which the Israelites received, were typical of those that are spiritual. In the general tenor of their conduct, we have a picture of our own. The judgments procured by their sins, prefigured those which we deserve. Hence it is said; "These things were our examples;—All these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."^f The *things* immediately referred to, according to some, are only the judgments inflicted. But as the apostle, in the preceding verses, enumerates several of the privileges of the Israelites, others apprehend, that in ver. 6. he particularly refers to these; as asserting, that the fathers in being under the cloud, and passing through the sea, &c. "were our examples;" and that in ver. 11. he has his eye principally directed to the judgments mentioned in the verses immediately preceding. Whatever be the particular scope of this passage, we are assured from other places, that the Israelites sustained a typical character, both as to privileges and judgments.

It is the same word in the original, which is used in both verses. It properly denotes such examples as were meant, not merely for instruction in general, according to the intention of all the examples recorded in Scripture, but such as were expressly designed to be emblems or figures. The word may be most literally rendered *types*. It has been observed, that the apostle, in the use of this term, borrows an image from a statuary, who makes a model in wax or clay, of an intended marble or golden statue of a king, or some distinguished personage. All those, of whom we read in Scripture, are examples to us, in consequence of their history being recorded by the Spirit of inspiration. But the Israelites are not "our examples," merely because their history is recorded; but their history is recorded, because they were primarily designed to be in a special manner "our examples." The things which are written "*happened* unto them for ensamples," or "befel them in a figure." The dis-

^z Gal. 3, 9.

^a Heb. xi. 40.

^b Heb. x. 1.

^c Col. ii. 17.

^d Heb. viii. 5.

^e Heb. ix. 9.

^f 1 Cor. x. 6, 11.

pensations of Providence towards them were principally meant as patterns of the divine conduct towards the Christian church. And in consequence of this original design, regulating the events themselves, "they are *written* for our admonition, upon whom "the ends of the world are come." The idea conveyed by the word *admonition*, is very beautiful. It denotes, that wholesome admonition, when successful, restores the mind, which was formerly fluctuating and disturbed, to a state of composure and serenity. How great is the tumult excited in the soul, by its "lusting after evil things, as they also lusted!" But the awful evidences of the divine displeasure, in their punishment, are designed as means in the hand of the Spirit, for stilling this tumult in the hearts of Christians, and for deterring them from similar provocations. It is thought that, in this expression, "upon whom the ends of the world are come," there is an allusion to the manner in which the Jews divided the period of the world's duration. They spoke of three ages; the first, before the law; the second, under the law; and the third, after the law. The apostle, in the very language in which he characterizes Christians, seems to urge the necessity of their profiting by these examples. "The ends of ages," he says, "are come upon" them. He represents the age, under which they live, as the complement of both the ages which preceded it; and the former dispensations as perfected in that of the New Testament. Therefore, as the light of the church is greatly increased, and as the doctrines and events of former times are now meant to have their full effect, her guilt must be greatly aggravated, if she refuse to take warning.*

But before proceeding to a more particular consideration of the history of the church of Israel, it may be necessary to observe, that the *types* or *examples*, exhibited to us in Scripture, are of two sorts; either of express institution, or of providential ordination. Many of these were expressly *instituted* by God, for representing Christ and the blessings of the gospel. These were either persons or things. There were many persons, who were typical of Christ, as being invested with particular offices, which had their completion in him only as Mediator. Such were Moses and Aaron, David and Solomon. Many things were also typical by express institution; as the whole of the service of God under the law. But besides these, there were many things and actions, which, although not capable of a solemn institution, were providentially *ordained* to be typical of future events. Some of these are particularly applied by the Spirit of God, in the New Testament, to things pertaining to the gospel. Others may be

* *Τελος* is used in the same sense, as denoting completion or perfection, when it is said, that "Christ is the *end* of the law for righteousness unto every one that believeth," Rom. x. 4. See also Luke xxii. 37.

thus applied, according to that general rule already considered, that "all things happened unto them for ensamples."^g

It may also be observed, that while the Israelites, as a people, prefigured the New-Testament Church, they must not be viewed, according to the vain imaginations of some, as if their character had been merely figurative. "This people," to adopt the language of an eminent writer, "was so a figure of the Christian church, as to be itself a true church. Its state so delineated ours, that it was nevertheless a state proper for the church at that period. The promises given to the Israelites, so shadowed forth the gospel, that they contained it. While their sacraments prefigured ours, they were notwithstanding for that time true sacraments of present efficacy. They enjoyed the same spirit of faith, who then rightly used both the doctrines and the signs."^h

SECTION I.

The Israelites bondmen in Egypt.—Chosen to be a peculiar people.—At first rejected the typical Saviour.—Passed through the Red Sea.—Had the law given.—Their worship typified that of the New-Testament Church.

LET us now more particularly inquire, in what respects the history of Israel contains instruction for us. This subject would admit of very ample discussion. But we mean only to take notice of some particulars in their history, which may serve as a key to the whole.

I. The literal Israelites were all in a state of *bondage in Egypt*. The LORD had said to their father Abraham; "Know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years."ⁱ When the time appointed was come, the prophecy was exactly fulfilled. They were not only reduced to a state of servitude, but treated as the vilest slaves. "The Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour. And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick."^k They were employed in the meanest and dirtiest work. It was impossible for them to please their cruel taskmasters. They rose in their demands. Not satisfied with their former labour, they required the full tale of brick without allowing straw.^l These taskmasters only fulfilled the orders of their unfeeling tyrant Pharaoh, who seems to have been divided between

^g See Owen on Heb. iii. 7—11. Vol. ii. p. 72—77.

^h Calvin. Comment. in 1 Cor. x. 11.

ⁱ Gen. xv. 13.

^k Exod. i. 13, 14.

^l Exod. v. 8.

fear and avarice. He was afraid of the growing power of the Israelites. Yet, from his avarice, he was unwilling to lose their labours.^m He would neither suffer them to live as the rest of his subjects, nor consent that they should leave his dominions. To weaken their power, he commanded that all their male children should be destroyed.

Instead of relaxing from his severity, after Moses had demanded the liberation of Israel in the name of JEHOVAH, he increased their bondage. From the eagerness of this people to embrace the first opportunity of making to themselves a golden calf, we might reckon it in the highest degree probable, that they were so far in love with their bondage as to worship the gods of Egypt. But we are not left to mere conjecture on this head. Many ages after their deliverance from Egypt, the Lord exhibits against them the charge of idolatry in this respect. To the prophet Ezekiel he delivers this command ; " Say unto them,—In the " day that I lifted up mine hand unto them, to bring them forth " of the land of Egypt,—then said I unto them, Cast ye away " every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not your- " selves with the idols of Egypt : I am the LORD your God. " But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me : " they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, " neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt."ⁿ The church of Israel is, by a striking metaphor, exhibited as an harlot. That idolatrous country is represented as the bed in which she was first defiled : and to her debasement there, all her subsequent impurities are traced.^o

Here we have a lively picture of the natural state of the true Israel. They are all bondmen. For " whosoever worketh sin, " is the bond-servant of sin."^p How despicable their situation, and how vile their employment ! They are in " the miry clay."^q They " lie among the pots."^r They " lade themselves with " thick clay."^s They are totally defiled in the service of sin ; " altogether as an unclean thing." They reckon themselves free, but " they are the servants of corruption." According to the number of their lusts are their taskmasters. These require the most implicit obedience to their orders. The wretched sinner exerts himself to the utmost, to satisfy his lusts. But they are insatiable. The more they are indulged, the more do they demand. Even when he has no present means of gratifying them, they insist for the full *term* of gratifications. Like the Egyptian taskmasters, they virtually say, " Go, get ye straw where ye can " find it : yet not ought of your work shall be diminished,"^t All these lusts are under the dominion of Satan, " the spirit that " now worketh powerfully in the children of disobedience ;"^u

^m Exod. i, 9, 10.

ⁿ Ezek. xx. 5,—8. See also Lev. xvii. 7.

^p John viii. 34.

^r Psal. lxxviii. 13.

^t Exod. v. 11,

^o Ezek. xxiii. 3, 8, 10, 27.

^q Psal. xl. 2.

^s Hab. ii. 6.

^u Eph. ii. 2.

that "leviathan, the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent," that "great dragon," of which Pharaoh was only an emblem.^v Under his influence, blinded sinners drudge hard for their own destruction. They spend their strength in his service, although death be their only wages. Do they at any time discover a desire to quit his service? Are they awakened by the Lord's messengers? Their hard master assigns them more work. He throws in new fuel to their lusts. He tries to bind them faster "with the cords of their sins." As Pharaoh commanded that every *male-child*, as soon as it was born, should be cast into the river;^w this cruel tyrant, as soon as he perceives any thought arising in their hearts, which threatens the security of his kingdom, does his utmost to drown it in the filthy torrent of corruption. Thus, often after partial awakenings, their bondage seems greater than ever.

Every spiritual Israelite, while in his natural situation, serves the gods of Egypt. This present evil world is his god; and, in serving it, he serves "the god of this world." He keeps a firm hold of "the abominations of his eyes." How contemptible were the deities of the Egyptians! They worshipped calves, and cats, and crocodiles; the meanest and the most destructive animals. Such deities fully represent the objects of the sinner's attachment. They are all not merely vile, but destructive. They are pleasures which "war against the soul." All the partial apostacies of the children of God, after they are delivered from the dominion of sin, must be traced to the depravity of their natural state "in the land of Egypt."

They are also under bondage to the law as a covenant of works. This demands perfect obedience to its precept. It requires the full tale of duties; but it allows no straw. Nor can it be accused of injustice. For it views every man in that state, in which all mankind were subjected to its rightful authority in the first Adam. "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good;" although we are "carnal, sold under sin."^x As the Israelites were *beaten* by their taskmasters, when they did not fulfil their work,^y the law strikes with the rod of its curse all who do not obey its precept. For this is its awful denunciation; "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them."

11. The Lord *chose* Israel to be a peculiar people, although they had nothing to recommend them to his love: He "avouched them to be his peculiar people,—and to make them high above all the nations he had made, in praise, and in name, and in honour."^z Nothing respecting their origin as a people,

^v Isa. xxvii. 1. comp. with Ezek. xxix. 3.

^w Exod. i. 22.

^y Exod. v. 14.

^x Rom. vii. 12, 14.

^z Deut. xxvi. 18, 19.

their situation, qualities or conduct, at the time of his separating them from other nations, or their future conduct, could in the least procure his love. His choice, as he often informs them, was absolutely sovereign. "The Lord set his love upon them, and chose them,—because the Lord loved them."^a In this choice, and in the sovereignty of it, Israel was a type of the church of Christ, under the New Testament. To her members are the characters of God's ancient people applied; "Ye are a chosen generation,—a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."^b—But we mean to illustrate this point afterwards, when we come to speak more particularly of divine sovereignty.

III. When the Lord was pleased to raise up a typical *Saviour* for Israel, they at first *rejected* him. The proto-martyr Stephen, "in his striking summary of the history of Israel, takes particular notice of this circumstance, as an evidence of their national obduracy: "This Moses, whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hands of the angel who appeared to him in the bush."^c Stephen refers to the account given of the first public appearance of Moses, when "it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel." We are informed that, "seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian: For he supposed his brethren should have understood, how that God by his hand would deliver them; but they understood not. And the next day he shewed himself unto them, as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren, why do ye wrong one to another? But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday!"^d Moses had not yet formally received his mission from God, nor been endowed with those miraculous powers by which it was to be attested. But are we to suppose that he did wrong in vindicating the cause of his brethren? On the contrary, Stephen, "being full of the Holy Ghost," evidently narrates the conduct of Moses with approbation. He declares, that Moses himself supposed that the Israelites "should have understood, that God by his hand would deliver them." Thus it appears that Moses acted from a persuasion of his being raised up by God for judging Israel. It would seem, indeed, that, in killing the Egyptian, he acted by an immediate impulse of the Holy Spirit; especially as his choice at this period is elsewhere

^a Deut. vii. 7, 8.

^c Acts vii. 35.

^b 1 Pet. ii. 9, 10.

^d Acts vii. 23—28.; Exod. ii. 11—14;

ascribed to faith. "By faith Moses, when he *was come to years*, "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." Now, it was at this very period, "when Moses *was grown*, that he went "out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens."^e

^f Stephen ascribes this refusal to the Israelites in general: and, indeed, there is no evidence that any of them disapproved of the conduct of him who treated Moses opprobriously. Their rejection of this deliverer manifests their ingratitude, both to God and to his servant. It also shews, that, how much soever they complained under their oppressions, they had no proper desire of deliverance. They knew not the worth of this blessing, when it was in their offer. The reluctance they discovered on this occasion, was certainly a chief reason of the great unwillingness of Moses to submit to the work of delivering Israel, forty years afterwards. Otherwise, it seems unaccountable that he, who was formerly so forward in the service, should now make so many objections to it, although expressly called of God.^f

When Moses, at the command of JEHOVAH, had left Midian, and when he and Aaron had delivered the divine message to Pharaoh, with respect to the liberation of Israel, he, instead of diminishing, increased their burdens.^g What was the consequence? The Israelites accuse these servants of God as the authors of their troubles. "They said unto them, The LORD look upon "you, and judge," or "be avenged; because ye have made our "savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes "of his servants, to put a sword in their hands to slay us."^h—Such was their conduct, although Aaron had informed them, in a public assembly, of all that the LORD had spoken to Moses concerning their deliverance, and had "done the signs" which he was empowered to do "in the sight of the people."ⁱ

In their conduct we may see that of the spiritual Israel before conversion. Their hearts are totally unaffected by the astonishing display of divine love in raising up for them a Saviour. When this compassionate Saviour looks on their affliction, and begins to judge them, by the operation of his Spirit in conviction, when he "reproves them of sin," or lays his hand on some particular corruption, they virtually say, "Who made thee a ruler and a judge "over us?" They "set at nought his counsel, and despise all his "reproof." When he "brings forth judgment," in the dispensation of the gospel, exhibiting to them his complete and everlasting salvation; they say, "Depart from us, for we desire "not the knowledge of thy ways." They will "not submit themselves to the righteousness of Jesus Christ." "What?" says the vain worldling, "must I become dead to society? Must all "my hopes of pleasure and preferment be strangled in the birth?

^e Heb. xi. 24. comp. with Exod. ii. 10, 11.

^f Exod. iv. 1—14.

^h Ver. 21.

^g Chap. v. 1—9.

ⁱ Chap. iv. 28—30.

"Must I become a gloomy, melancholy person, like such a one?" When the consciences of elect sinners are so awakened, by means of the word, that they find the burden of sin such as they never found it before; often do they, like the ancient Israelites, ascribe all their troubles to the faithful servants of God; supposing that they might still have lived in peace, had they not heard this or that minister, this or the other sermon. "They will not come," they "incline not to come to Christ, that they may have life." They wish to be delivered from wrath. But they have no genuine desire of deliverance from their worst bondage. For they continue in love with sin. Could the justice of God have been impeached, although he had left unbelieving and ungrateful Israel to groan under the yoke of Pharaoh, after they had so contemptuously treated the deliverer whom he had sent and miraculously attested? Such is the perverseness which the elect often discover, after God begins to deal with their souls, as plainly to shew, that all he does for them, is merely the fruit of sovereign mercy.—Such is the guilt of their unbelief, in resisting the common operations of his Spirit, and rejecting the offered Deliverer; that of itself it would be a sufficient ground of eternal condemnation, although they were not chargeable with the guilt of any other sin.

iv. The LORD *redeemed* Israel from Egypt by a wonderful display of his power. Therefore it is often said, that he "brought them out by strength of hand." He had declared to Abraham concerning his posterity; "That nation whom they shall serve will I judge; and afterward shall they come out with great substance."^k He began his work of judgment, by bringing his plagues on Pharaoh, and on his servants, and on all the Egyptians. After they had endured nine severe plagues, still they were unwilling to let Israel go. The LORD warned them of one more awful than any of the preceding; the destruction of all the first-born in the land. He prepared his people for their deliverance, by the observation of the Passover; and preserved them from the general calamity, by the sprinkling of blood.^l So much were the Egyptians affected by the plague of the first-born, that they "were urgent upon the people that they might send them out of the land in haste: for they said, We be all dead men." They "were thrust out of Egypt."^m On that fatal night did the LORD "execute judgment against all the gods of Egypt."ⁿ He caused his people also to "spoil the Egyptians."^o The Israelites had not gone far, before Pharaoh and his servants repented that they had allowed them to depart. They said, "Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?"^p Pharaoh accordingly made ready a great army, and pursued them with the most insolent boastings. When the host of Pharaoh approached, such was the situation of the Israelites, that it is not

^k Gen. xv. 14.
ⁿ Ver. 12.

^l Exod. xii. 1—13.
^o Ver. 35, 36.

^m Ver. 33, 39.
^p Chap. xiv. 5.

surprising that he should consider them as completely entangled, and that unbelief should represent their case as hopeless. For they were inclosed by high mountains on either hand, while the Egyptian army pressed them behind, and the Red Sea lay directly before them. They had no choice, but either to be at the mercy of Pharaoh, or to enter into the devouring deeps of the sea. At the command of God they went forward. Moses lifted up his rod, and stretched his hand over the sea. By means of a strong east wind, God caused the sea to go back, and made it dry land. "The waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left."^g The Egyptians pursued the Israelites into the sea. But Moses, at the command of God, again stretched out his rod over the sea, and it covered the Egyptians, so that not so much as one of them escaped. They who sought the destruction of God's people, were themselves completely destroyed.

What Christian perceives not, in this interesting history, many striking features of our spiritual redemption? Often the LORD, when he means graciously to visit the "vessels of mercy," pours out his plagues on their lusts. Their way is hedged up with thorns. They seek their lovers, but they cannot find them. He takes away their corn, and their wine. He destroys their vines and their fig-trees; the things that ministered to corruption.^r—After all, sin retains its hold of the heart. He perhaps inflicts still more severe strokes. They tremble under awful apprehensions of eternal destruction. As the Egyptians *thrust out* the Israelites, sin as it were contributes to its own destruction. When the conscience is awakened by means of the word, sin raises such a tumult in the soul, as more fully to unfold its true character, and display its desperate wickedness, than it had done before. "Sin," as in the experience of Paul, "works all manner of concupiscence." The very attempts which it makes for retaining its dominion, are overruled for hastening its destruction. For by means of them, the sinner is made to perceive both its atrocity, and its astonishing power in the heart. He is perhaps in the same situation with the Israelites on the borders of the Red Sea. He is brought to the brink of despair, having no prospect but that of being eternally a prey to sin, and to its dreadful consequences. Sin not only wrought in Paul "all manner of concupiscence;" but "deceived him, and slew him:—that it might appear sin, it wrought death in him by that which is good."^s But in the time of greatest extremity, the LORD works deliverance. His people are "shut up unto the faith." They see no way of escaping from destruction, but by an immediate obedience to "the command of God," in "believing on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." They have indeed been formerly redeemed by the price of Christ's blood, by the blood of that spotless Lamb,

^g Exod. xiv. 16, 21, 22.^r Hos. ii. 6—12.^s Rom. vii. 8, 11, 13.

who is "our Passover sacrificed for us." But their enemies retain the dominion over them till they be also redeemed by the power of his Spirit. Christ saves them not by *blood* only, but also by *water*. Of this salvation we have an illustrious type in the deliverance of Israel at the Red Sea. This deliverance, indeed, may be viewed as at once prefiguring the merit of Christ's death, and the power of his Spirit; the deliverance of his people, both from their guilt, and from the dominion of their spiritual enemies.

We learn from an inspired writer, that all the Israelites were baptized unto Moses "in the cloud, and in the sea."^t This may literally refer to the drops of water which might fall upon them, from the over-shadowing cloud, and from the sea which stood in heaps on both sides, as they passed through. The language signifies, that they were baptized unto Moses as a typical mediator; and thus bound to submit to that covenant, which God was afterwards to reveal to them by his ministry. But it also plainly denotes, that in the passage of the literal Israel through the Red Sea, we have a figure of the same kind with the initiating seal of the covenant of grace; a type of "the washing of regeneration," and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, of which baptism is only the sign.

As baptism respects the removal both of the guilt, and of the power and pollution of sin, it is natural to think, that the baptism of Israel in the sea respected both. Was the Red Sea dried up by means of the rod of Moses? By the cross of the antitypical Moses, a way is opened for his spiritual Israel to the land of promise. Did the waters form walls for the defence of Israel? It is by the blood of Jesus that they are delivered from eternal destruction. Did the same rod which divided the waters for the salvation of Israel, bring them back for the destruction of the Egyptians? The cross of Christ is "to them who are called, "the power of God;" although to others a stumbling block." That very gospel, which to some is the savour of life unto life, is to others the savour of death unto death. Was the Red Sea dried up, not only by the stretching out of the rod of Moses, but by the blowing of a strong *wind*? The Lord Christ sends forth his word, which is "the rod of his mouth;" "the rod of his strength;" ^u he accompanies it by the operation of his Spirit, "that wind which "bloweth where it listeth;" ^v and his chosen "people pass from death unto life." They who before saw insuperable difficulties in the way of their coming to Christ, now find them all removed. "By faith, they pass through the Red Sea "as on dry land."^w

As God began to *judge* the enemies of his people, when he inflicted his grievous plagues on them, he finished this work by

^t 1 Cor. x. 2.

^v John iii. 8. See also, Isa. xxi. 15.

^u Isa. xi. 4; Psal. cx. 2.

^w Heb. xi. 29.

their complete destruction in the Red Sea. Then was his promise fulfilled; "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."^x The Lord redeems his spiritual Israel, by a deliverance, resembling that of his ancient people, when he brought them out of Egypt. Therefore he says, "According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt, will I shew unto him marvellous things." And how does the church interpret this gracious promise? By an evident allusion to the destruction of Pharaoh and his host. "He will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea."^y The "old man" is destroyed in the work of regeneration. The dominion of sin is as certainly broken, as its guilt is removed; so that the Christian has no more reason to fear that it shall regain its power, or rise up against him to condemnation, than the Israelites had to fear that Pharaoh and his host should again tyrannize over them, after they saw them drowned in the Red Sea. Here also we have a type of the final destruction of sin.

Christ also judges "the prince of this world," and "casts him out"^z of their hearts, delivering them from his tyranny; as he hath destroyed his power on the cross. Thus he "wounds the dragon."^a For their sakes also he judges this world, by delivering them from its dominion. In the destruction of Pharaoh, indeed, we have a type and pledge of the final overthrow of Satan, and all the enemies of the church; of that serpent and his seed, who have still sought to destroy the seed of the woman. In this great work they are made to "stand still, and see the salvation of their God." They have no merit in the work. Although made active in turning to God, the change is wholly the effect of divine power, and accomplished by the Spirit of God working in them.

In the destruction of the Egyptians, we have in general also a type of the fate of all who are finally impenitent.

y. The law was given to the Israelites from mount Sinai. It was the purpose of God to employ a mediator between him and them in this transaction. But he so ordered matters, that the people themselves should earnestly desire this privilege, in consequence of a deep conviction of its necessity. Accordingly, when, in the proclamation of the law, they heard the awful voice of God, accompanied with thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake, they were so filled with terror, that they said unto Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die."^b God approved of their proposal. Therefore he said to Moses; "I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they

^x Exod. xiv. 14.

^a Isa. li. 9.

^y Mic. vii. 15, 19.

^b Exod. xx. 18, 19.

^z John xii. 31;

"have well said all that they have spoken,—Go, say unto them, "Get ye into your tents again. But as for thee, stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and "the statutes, and the judgments which thou shalt teach them, "that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess it." ^c Hence the apostle Paul declares, that the law was "ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator." ^d By the mediator here mentioned, some suppose that our Lord himself is meant. But it seems more natural to understand the language with respect to Moses, who was evidently employed as a typical mediator; especially as it is elsewhere said, that "the law was "given by Moses;" ^e and that the statutes, and judgments, and laws, were "made between the Lord and the children of Israel, "in Mount Sinai, by the hand of Moses." ^f

On this occasion, there was a promulgation of the law as a covenant of works, with its promise and threatening annexed. The great body of that ignorant and obdurate people seem to have understood it entirely in a legal sense. However, it never was the intention of God to give life to man, since the fall, by that broken covenant. Man could not receive life in this way; for the law was "weak through the flesh," or corruption of our nature. But in the repetition of the law in its covenant form, God had various important ends to serve. He judged this necessary for manifesting the immutability of the law in its federal requisitions. He at the same time meant, by an awful display of its strictness and severity, to restrain that stiff-necked people from going to such excess in sin as they would otherwise have done; "for "the law was added because of transgressions." ^g Thus also he displayed to man his guilt as a transgressor. For "by the law is "the knowledge of sin." ^h He, by the same means, proclaimed the condemnation of the sinner. For "what things soever the "law saith, it saith to them, who are under the law," not that any mouth may be opened for self-justification, but "that every "mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty," that is, evidently appear to be guilty "before God." ⁱ The language which the law spoke to the Israelites, so far from giving ground for any hopes of justification, was directly calculated to convince them of their condemnation. For it said, "Cursed is every one "that continueth not in all things." ^k From the strictness of its demands, and the severity of its denunciations, the law was meant to shew the necessity of a Saviour. Therefore the apostle says; "The law was our schoolmaster, to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." ^l The law, as it was "ordained in the hand of a mediator," looked forward to its full completion in due time. For as really as Moses stood between God and the people, that glorious Person, whom Moses prefigured, was to stand in the relation of a Mediator, and "fulfil all

^c Deut. v. 28—31.

^f Lev. xxvi. 46.

ⁱ Rom. iii. 19.

^d Gal. iii. 19.

^g Gal. iii. 19.

^k Gal. iii. 10.

^e John i. 17.

^h Rom. iii. 20.

^l Ver. 24.

"righteousness," by perfectly obeying the precept of the law, and completely sustaining its curse.

The precept of the law, as a covenant of works, was revealed not only for discovering sin, and shewing the necessity of salvation, but in direct subserviency to the appearance and work of the promised Messiah. We are sure that the curse of the law was executed on him as our surety. He was "made a curse for us."^m He was prefigured, and directly pointed out, in all the sacrifices, as the sin-offering for his people. In this respect, he is "the end of the law for righteousness."ⁿ But in order to the completion of a justifying righteousness, on the part of our Redeemer, it was indispensably necessary, not only that the curse of the law should be sustained; and thus removed, but that its precept, as a covenant, should be fulfilled. We certainly know that the curse, as revealed to Israel, bore a relation to him. This remarkably appears from the malediction denounced against the man that should hang on a tree. Some view these words, "The law was added, because of transgressions," as signifying that the law was added to the covenant made with Abraham, in relation to the finishing of transgression by the suretyship of Christ; especially as it is subjoined,—"until the promised seed should come," which restricts this use of the law to the period preceding the incarnation and death of the Surety.

Now, as the curse of the law referred to Christ, it is reasonable to conclude that its precept had a similar respect. Otherwise, there would have been a legal reference to one branch of his surety-righteousness only. In regard to the precept, as well as the curse, he is the end of the law for our justification. Accordingly, God revealed the precept with a promise of life.—For it was said; "The man that doth these things shall live in them." This undoubtedly had an ultimate respect to eternal life: as appears from our Lord's referring the young man, who sought to "inherit eternal life," by his own doings, to the law. But did God therefore reveal the precept of the law with a design that men should expect eternal life by their own obedience? By no means. This revelation was in subserviency to the perfect obedience of the Saviour, *that man* who was to do these things, and to live in them, nay, in this way to give life to all whom he represented. The law, therefore, was revealed at Mount Sinai as a covenant of works, promising eternal life, and threatening eternal death; as the observation of its precept, and the bearing of its curse, constituted the condition of the covenant of grace to our glorious Surety. To this purpose it has been said, that "the Sinai covenant was a covenant of works, as to be fulfilled by Jesus Christ, represented under an imperfect administration of the covenant of grace to Israel:" or, that it is "the covenant of grace as to its legal condition, even for eternal, to be per-

^m Gal. iii. 13.

ⁿ Rom. x. 4.

“formed by Jesus Christ, held forth under a servile, typical, conditional administration of it for temporals unto Israel.”^o

The law was also given to Israel, as the rule of their obedience. God thus taught them, that they were not so become their own masters, by their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, that they might henceforth live as they pleased : but that their obedience was thereby transferred to him ; and that the more free they were from the yoke of others, the more they were bound to his service. Hence the great argument which he employs, for enforcing obedience to his commandments, is derived from the consideration of this merciful deliverance : “ I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”^h He not only prefaces the moral law with this powerful argument, but uses it on other occasions for enforcing precepts of a ceremonial or judicial nature.^g He still reminds them, that they are under the strongest obligations as “ a people saved by the LORD.”

In all this they were a remarkable figure of the spiritual Israel. While they are yet in an unrenewed state, the LORD employs his law for restraining their lusts. He says to each of his elect, “ Live in thy blood.”^r He particularly preserves them from committing the “ sin which is unto death.” When he is about to deliver them from the dominion of sin, he sends his law for conviction. He makes the commandment to *come*, by discovering to them its spirituality and extent. He brings home the curse of the law on their consciences. Hence they *die* to all legal hopes of salvation.^s They “ through the law are dead to the law” as a covenant, that they “ may live unto God.”^t Often he brings them, under the operation of the spirit of bondage, to the foot of Mount Sinai, “ to the mount that burns with fire, and unto blackness and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which they that hear entreat “ that the word may not be spoken to them any more !”^u Then are they actuated by the same desire as God’s ancient people.— They perceive the absolute necessity of “ a days-man,” who can “ lay his hand upon both.”^v In sovereign mercy the LORD reveals a Mediator, infinitely able for this work. As even the repetition of the law, at Mount Sinai, in its covenant form, was meant in direct subserviency to a better covenant, Christ makes no other use of the law, in dealing with the elect before conversion, than in order to his bringing them to himself. They are “ concluded,” or “ shut up as prisoners, all under sin, that the promise by faith “ of Jesus Christ might be given to them.”^w

^o Petto’s Difference between the Old and New Covenant, p. 124.

^h Exod. xx. 2.

^r Ezek. xvi. 6.

^t Gal. ii. 19.

^v Job ix. 33.

^g Lev. xix. 36 ; Numb. xv. 41.

^s Rom. vii. 9.

^u Heb. xii. 18, 19.

^w Gal. iii. 22.

It merits our special attention, that, in the most particular prophecy delivered by Moses concerning the Messiah, he not only describes him as a Mediator, but as his own antitype in that character which he sustained at Mount Sinai, in consequence of the earnest desire of Israel, and the express approbation and ordination of JEHOVAH. In the solemn repetition of the law, he directs the eyes of all the tribes to this most important circumstance. "The LORD thy God," he says, "will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me ;—according to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb, in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God ; neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee,"^x &c. This Prophet was to be like unto Moses, particularly as corresponding to *all the desire* of Israel, when they saw the necessity of a Mediator.^y And so completely is he qualified for the work of standing between God and guilty men, that his character is commensurate to all the desire of every soul awakened to a sense of his sin and misery. To this Mediator are all the elect enabled to come, in the day of their effectual vocation. Convinced that they have no righteousness of their own ; by faith in his blood, "they are made the righteousness of God in him." They, who in their own persons can neither fulfil the precept of the law, nor bear its curse, are viewed, as soon as they believe, as having perfectly done both in the person of their Surety. For they are "crucified with Christ."

Was the law given to ancient Israel, "in the hand of a Mediator," as the rule of their obedience ? In this respect also did they prefigure the true seed of Abraham. As redeemed from spiritual Egypt, they receive the law as a rule of life. They are indeed eternally delivered from it as a covenant of works. Yet they are not therefore, "without law to God, but under the law to Christ."^z They do not acknowledge it, as promising life and threatening death. But they receive it from the hand of their loving Redeemer, who hath delivered them from death, and given them eternal life. The law, as a covenant, has led them to Christ as a Mediator ; and Christ the Mediator leads them back to the law, as the eternal rule of their conduct. The great motive to their obedience, is the consideration of his adorable love, in bringing them "out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." For they are assured, that he hath "delivered them out of the hands of their enemies, that they might serve him, *without fear*, in holiness and righteousness

^x Deut. xviii. 15—18.

^y See this passage more fully explained, Vindication of the Doctrine of Scripture, and of the Primitive Faith concerning the Deity of Christ, in reply to Dr. Priestly's History of Early opinions, &c. vol. i. p. 496—501.

^z 1 Cor. ix. 21.

"before him, all the days of their life."^a They know that they are perpetually bound to "give thanks unto the LORD, because "his mercy endureth for ever;" and because he hath given them so wonderful an evidence of it, in "redeeming them from the "hand of the enemy."^b

vi. The *worship* of Israel typified that of the New-Testament Church. All the ordinances of worship were of divine appointment. The people of Israel had no right either to add or to diminish in any respect. Therefore the LORD said to Moses, in regard to the tabernacle; "See that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount." Now "these "things serve unto the example of heavenly things, as Moses "was admonished of God," when he gave him this charge.^c We learn from it, that "in vain those worship" God, who "teach "for doctrines the commandments of men." The ordinance of sacrifice instituted immediately after the fall, was continued among the Israelites. They were taught that atonement could be made only by blood. A variety of sacrifices, more expressly figurative of the one offering of our Lord Jesus Christ, were enjoined. As he was the great object pointed out in all these sacrifices; the people of Israel, in offering them, were striking types of all the true Israel of God in New-Testament times. Were the Israelites unto God "a kingdom of priests?"^d They were not all employed in this character. For the priesthood was confined to one tribe, and to one family in that tribe. But they were "a kingdom of priests," inasmuch as in their collective capacity they typified that spiritual church, consisting of all those who are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," whom Peter designs "a royal priesthood."^e Even during the subsistence of the legal dispensation, God frequently informed that people of the comparative unacceptableness of their ritual worship, and prepared his church for its abolition. This seems to be the principal design of the Spirit in the Fiftieth Psalm. There he informs his professing people, that he prefers "thanksgiving" to "the flesh "of bulls" and "the blood of goats;" and that the offering of praise is more glorifying to him than any other which men can present.^f Elsewhere he pours contempt on the oblations of calves, and others of the same nature; when he foretells, that his people, in returning from their apostacy, should "render the "calves of their lips."^g To the same purpose, the inspired writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, after illustrating the vanity of legal sacrifices in themselves, and shewing that they had all received their accomplishment in Christ, declares the superior

^a Luke i. 74, 75.

^c Exod. xxv. 40; Heb. viii. 5.

^e 1 Pet. ii. 9.

^b Psal. cvii. 1, 2.

^d Exod. xix. 6.

^f Psal. l. 13, 14, 23.

^g Hos. xiv. 2.

honour of the New-Testament Church, in these words ; " By him therefore," that is, by Christ, who " suffered without the gate," as our only atoning sacrifice, " let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name."^h This sacrifice indeed, in its full extent, includes the offering of ourselves, of the whole man, of the body, not as a lifeless oblation, but as animated by a soul quickened by his Spirit, and washed in that meritorious blood in which is *the life*. Therefore saith the apostle Paul : " I beseech you brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your *bodies* a *living* sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."ⁱ Thus, he " who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood," hath " made us kings and priests unto God and his Father."^k It is not, either as cleansed by our own services, or as washed in our own blood, but as purified by his, that we are admitted to this high honour. Every real believer, through his glorious High-Priest, hath the same dignity with the high-priest under the law. His privilege indeed is unspeakably greater. He was permitted to enter into the holy of holies ; but it was only once a year : and he could not, according to the nature of the dispensation, do it without fear. But we, at all times, " have *boldness* to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." We are called to " come boldly to the throne of grace."^l

The Israelites, in all their ritual worship, were confined to one altar.^m To build another altar of burnt-offering, was rebellion against the LORD.ⁿ Few of that carnal people could understand the true reason of this restriction. It was written especially for our sakes ; and points out to us the unity of our gospel-altar, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is that altar which alone can " sanctify the gift ;" that altar, from which those who adhere to the law are excluded. For " we have an altar whereof they have no right to eat, which serve the tabernacle."^o Hither must we bring all our spiritual offerings. Here only can " the sacrifice of praise be acceptable." And on this altar, which God by way of eminence calls *his*, even the offerings of poor sinners of the Gentiles are accepted. For, concerning " the sons of the strangers," he hath said, " Their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon *mine* altar."^p

In a word, the people of God were still to worship towards the mercy-seat, or propitiatory.^q This was that covering of pure gold which was spread over the ark, in which the two tables of the law were kept. The cloud of glory rested above it. Towards this, the Israelites, in all their dispersions, were still to present their supplications.^r Need I say that it was an illustrious figure

^h Heb. xiii. 15.

^l Heb. x. 19 ; iv. 16.

ⁿ Josh. xxii. 16.

^q Exod. xxv. 17—22.

ⁱ Rom. xii. 1.

^m Lev. xvii. 8, 9 ; Deut. xii. 11—14.

^o Heb. xiii. 10.

^r 1 Kings viii. 29, 30, 35.

^k Rev. i. 6.

^p Isa. lvi. 7.

of our Lord Jesus Christ, who intervenes between the majesty of God and his guilty people, covering from the eye of justice all their transgressions of his holy law. Therefore it is declared, that "he is our propitiation,"^s and that he is "set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare the righteousness of God in the remission of sins."^t

SECTION II.

The Government of the Israelites of divine origin.—God himself their Judge and King.—Jerusalem chosen as the Seat of Empire.—God's Deputies endued with his Spirit.—Bound to consult the LORD, and miraculously directed by him.—He protected and delivered them.—Went up before them to battle.—Did not permit them to place confidence in an arm of flesh.

VII. ISRAEL, as a nation, in respect of *government*, eminently prefigured the New-Testament Church. This requires our particular attention, that we may know in what respects the Israelites are exhibited to us as patterns; and, at the same time, by duly advertg to the difference between the old and the new dispensation, may be able to "look to the end of that which is abolished." When the children of Israel are called "a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation," in consequence of their being set apart or consecrated to JEHOVAH; it is evident that this consecration respected them, not merely as a church but as a state. Therefore they are described in terms expressive of *civil* relations. These very characters being by the Spirit transferred to the people of God under the New-Testament; it is no less evident that Israel, even in their national or political character, typified the Church of Christ. Hence, we are not so to distinguish between the church and state of Israel, as to consider the one as a figure of the New-Testament Church, and the other as a pattern for kingdoms or nations consisting of professing Christians; but to view that people in their collective capacity, both as a political and as an ecclesiastical society, as *one* figure of the true Israel.

1. The government of Israel was wholly of *divine origin*. Its form, whether as civil or ecclesiastical, and all its ordinances, were given immediately by God. He was their Lawgiver. He "spake with them from heaven, and gave them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments,—by the hand of Moses his servant."^u Nothing pertaining to their government was left to their own wisdom, or to the spur of the occasion.

^s 1 John ii. 2.

^t Rom. iii. 25.

^u Neh. ix. 13, 14.

They had not, like any other nation, a right to alter their form of government, in any instance whatsoever. The care which God, in this respect, exercised about Israel, was undoubtedly a figure of the divine origin of the New-Testament Church, in her whole constitution. Thus our Lord declares, with respect to her frame and origin, "My kingdom is not of this world;"—"my kingdom is not from hence."^v Many good men have supposed, that Christ hath appointed no particular form of government for his Church under this dispensation, but hath left this to be modelled by men, as it shall be most agreeable to their own ideas, or most suitable to particular times, and to the circumstances of her local situation. But this supposition implies a manifest absurdity; nay, a multitude of absurdities. Were this the case, Christ would have a kingdom, but a kingdom without any definite form. God must have manifested far more regard to "the patterns of heavenly things," than to these heavenly things themselves.—Moses must have been more faithful "as a servant" in his Master's house, than Jesus as "a Son over his own house." The Church, it is granted, is "God's building." But, according to this system, it must be a building without any regular plan, without any symmetry or order. It is supposed that God hath laid the foundation of this house, but that it is his pleasure that the whole superstructure should be the creature of human fancy.

2. According to the peculiar nature of the government given to the Israelites, *God himself* was their *judge* and *king*. Even in their political capacity, they sustained a relation to him, to which there never was, and never will be, a parallel. Therefore has their government, as a nation, been justly called a *theocracy*, because God was their Supreme Ruler. The judges, to whom during several centuries the power was immediately committed, were merely his deputies. He "gave unto them judges,"^w not simply in the ordinary course of his providence, which he extends to all nations; but by raising up, in an extraordinary way, particular persons for the work of judgment. His people had no choice left them. They were bound to obey whomsoever he appointed. These judges knew that they were mere representatives. When the Israelites seemed to forget this, when they proposed to Gideon, as an evidence of their gratitude to him, for his instrumentality in their deliverance from the Midianites, to establish an hereditary authority in his family, he at once rejected the idea with pious abhorrence. "Rule thou," said they, "over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also." But Gideon replied, "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the LORD shall rule over you."^x Not merely by their wish to transmit the power to his posterity, but even by proposing to secure it to himself during life; he saw that they had forgotten God's sovereign right of nominating, and also of setting

^v John. xviii. 36.^w Acts xiii. 20.^x Judg. viii. 22, 23.

aside, one whom he had been pleased to employ for a time. Therefore he said, “ *The LORD shall rule over you.* I will not “ even take the name of a ruler. If he, who has called me to his “ service, please to continue me as his deputy, I am satisfied. . If “ not, let him set me aside, and appoint whomsoever he will in “ my stead.”

When, during the administration of Samuel, the Israelites demanded a king, the LORD considered it as rebellion against himself in this character. “ The thing displeased Samuel, when “ they said, give us a king to judge us : and Samuel prayed unto “ the LORD. And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto “ the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee : for they “ have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should “ not reign over them.”^y But they could not by this requisition have rejected the LORD, if he had not stood in the relation of a supreme political head to Israel. For they made no proposal of renouncing subjection to him in any other respect. They desire not a change in their worship. They ask not a new system of civil laws. All that they demand, is an alteration as to the executive form. The reason given by the Israelites for persisting in their demand, after Samuel shewed them the consequences of its being granted, clearly demonstrates that they were sensible of the peculiarity of their civil government, as in this respect differing from that of every other people. “ They said, Nay, but we “ will have a king over us : that we also may be *like all the na-* “ *tions*, and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and “ fight our battles.”^z Had not JEHOVAH done all this for them ? Yes ; but they wished a *visible* head. Afterwards, we find Samuel charging them with great wickedness in asking a king. He proves this charge from the relation in which God stood to them : “ Ye said unto me, Nay, but a king shall reign over us ; “ when the LORD your God was your king.”^a

The people sinned in making this request. But even their guilt was permitted and overruled for the accomplishment of God’s immutable purpose. It was his will to give them a king. He might justly have rejected them as a people from this time forward, as they had rejected him. And indeed, some suppose that the theocracy was at this time abolished. But the idea is evidently unfounded. The people were brought to confess their guilt ; and the Lord continued their relation to himself. They said to Samuel ; “ Pray for thy servants, that we die not : for “ we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king. And “ Samuel said unto the people, Fear not : (ye have done all this “ wickedness ; yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but “ serve the LORD with all your heart ; and turn ye not aside : “ for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit “ nor deliver, for they are vain) : For the LORD will *not forsake* “ *his people*, for his great name’s sake : because it hath pleased

y 1 Sam. viii. 6, 7.

z Ver. 19. 20.

a Chap. xii. 12, 17.

"the LORD to make you his people."^b It is evident that the theocracy was continued, although the character of the visible ruler was changed. The kings were still, in a peculiar manner, God's deputies. They were not chosen by the people, but appointed by him in an extraordinary way; and they were deposed at his pleasure. He gave Saul "in his anger;" yet, when the lot fell on him, Samuel said to the people, "See ye him, whom 'the LORD hath chosen.'"^c It was not by the Israelites, but by God himself, that this disobedient prince was afterwards rejected. David his successor, was immediately appointed by God, and employed merely as his deputy. "The LORD said to him, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over 'Israel.'"^d His commission runs in the style of that of an inferior officer. The people were not David's; they were still God's. Even when he made the throne hereditary in the house of David, he exercised his right of election, in preferring Solomon to all his brethren. It is said of Solomon, that he "sat on 'the throne of JEHOVAH.'"^e How could this language have been used with propriety, had the theocracy been abolished? In this respect, undoubtedly, Solomon prefigured Him, who hath "sat down with the Father upon *his* throne."^f The kingdom "in 'the hands of the sons of David,'" is in like manner called by Abijah "the kingdom of the LORD."^g

Although the theocracy still continued, God did not always exercise his power in the same manner, or manifest his superintendence in the same degree. He did not renounce his kingly relation to his people, when they forsook him. He only deprived them of the more clear and striking evidences of it. But when they returned to their duty, he favoured them with the same proofs of his royal care and clemency, that they had formerly enjoyed. While all the princes of the race of David were God's deputies with respect to their *office*, those who acknowledged his supreme authority received special tokens of the continuance of his presidency. The throne of David itself was still typical of the throne of the Messiah: but a peculiar honour was reserved for those princes who followed the LORD. They were generally, if not all, *personal* types of the Son and Lord of David. Israel, in this respect, eminently prefigured the New-Testament Church. "The LORD is our judge,—the LORD is our king." It was never meant that the type should be fulfilled in any earthly kingdom. This honour exclusively belongs to the Church, which is "the 'kingdom of heaven.'" Christ is her only Head and Sovereign. He is "the Judge of Israel."^h Under the law, he presided over "an holy nation." He still retains the character of "King of 'saints.'" As, according to the human nature, he was lineally descended from David; "the government is upon his shoulder."

^b 1 Sam. xii. 19—22.

^d 2 Sam. v. 2.

^f Rev. iii. 21.

^c Chap. x. 24.

^e 1 Chron. xxix. 23.

^g 2 Chron. xiii. 8.

^h Mic. v. 2.

He shall sit "upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever."ⁱ He employs men in managing the concerns of his kingdom. But their power is purely ministerial. They have no dominion over the consciences of others. Their work is to declare whatsoever he hath commanded, and to judge according to his laws. No man, whether in a sacred or a civil character, has any right to exercise dominion over his Church.— Did he account it rebellion in his ancient people to ask a king? He accounts it rebellion against his authority, for any one to usurp supremacy over his Church, or even to submit to this usurpation. He will have all his spiritual subjects to know, that it is better to obey God than man. Christ himself answers all the purposes of a visible head to his kingdom: and it is worthy of inquiry, whether solicitude, on the part of the church, to be secured in her *collective* capacity, by the sanction of human laws, and by the sword of the civil magistrate, savour not too much of the spirit of the Israelites, when they demanded a king, that they might be "like all the nations," and that this "their king might fight their battles?" Is the church actually incorporated with the state? Is she not, in this case, *like the rest of the nations?*

It is with the Christian Church as it was with Israel. In a time of apostacy, the Lord withdraws the tokens of his presence. He restrains the influences of his Spirit. Then "the land of the daughter of his people" brings forth only "briers and thorns." Her enemies may be ready to triumph, as if there were "no king" in her, as if her "counsellor were perished." But when she returns to the Lord, he favours her anew with the comfortable evidences of his gracious presence. He "renews her days as of old." He "causes his glorious voice to be heard" by his enemies, "and shews the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger."^k

All true Christians not only acknowledge subjection to Christ as their king, but have his throne erected in their hearts. "The Lord" indeed "rules over them." He hath subdued them to himself. His arrows have been sharp in their hearts. They submit to his sceptre of righteousness, and cheerfully obey his holy precepts. They daily give him the revenue of praise. He fights their battles for them, "subduing all their iniquities," and "undoing all them that afflict" their souls.

3. The *seat* of empire was Jerusalem. God chose Jerusalem to be his "holy city." In Zion he erected his royal palace, and the throne of his majesty. He said, "This is my rest; here will I dwell: for I have desired it." It was indeed "the city of the great king." All church-members, according to their character as Christians, are "come to the Mount Zion, and to the

"city of the living God." This is the real attainment of all who believe. They are "the children of Zion." Therefore the faithful adherents of Jesus are represented as standing "on the Mount Zion."^l The name of Jerusalem and of Zion is, under the New Testament, transferred to the whole church of the living God. This is that "Jerusalem which is above." With respect to her is that sure decree accomplished; "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." The typical holiness of this place was merely an emblem of the true holiness of the church of Christ.

God had often assured his people, even while they were in the wilderness, that he would afterwards make known to them a "place where he would put his name." But his ark was still in an ambulatory state, and he had not told them where it should rest, till the son of Jesse arose. The designation of this place as the seat of the kingdom, and the choice of David as his deputy, are intimately connected, as circumstances which had a special relation to each other. The LORD said to David; "Since the day that I brought forth my people out of the land of Egypt, I chose no *city* among all the tribes of Israel to build an house in, that my name might be there, neither chose I any *man* to be a ruler over my people Israel: But I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there, and have chosen David to be over my people Israel."^m He makes no account of Saul, because he was "given in anger." David was the most remarkable personal type of Jesus Christ. He is therefore not only called "the Son of David," but he bears his name.ⁿ The throne of the kingdom was not pointed out, till *he* appeared who was the most illustrious figure of that glorious Personage who should sit on it "for ever and ever." Many great and good men had God employed in his work. But his ark must be brought to its rest by no other than that "man after his own heart," who so eminently prefigured *him*, who alone could truly say, "Thy law is within my heart," and in whom only *ЖЕНОВЛ* found "the place of his rest."^o

The honour of "finding out a place for the LORD, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob," was reserved for him, who was not only born in Bethlehem-Ephratah, and in this respect a figure of that ruler who should "come out of" it; but whose *afflictions*, before he came to the throne, in consequence of his being anointed of God, so eminently typified those of his son and Lord, in the purchase of his spiritual kingdom.^p Many *saviours* and conquerors had formerly appeared in Israel. But Jerusalem remained in the hands of the heathen till David came to the throne.^q Nor could he take possession of it as his royal

^l Rev. xiv. 1.

ⁿ Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24.; xxxvii. 24, 25.

^p Psal. cxxxii. 1—6.

^m 2 Chron. vi. 5, 6.

^o Isa. lxvi. 1, 2.

^q Josh. xv. 63.

city, till he won it from the Jebusites by his sword ; and vanquished those *blind* and *lame* gods, which its inhabitants worshipped, and in which they trusted.^r For in this respect, also, it was necessary that he should prefigure him, who, by his almighty power, was to redeem his Church from her “ vain conversation,” from the service of “ the god of this world,” and from the dominion of all her spiritual enemies.

4. Those, whom God raised up for judging Israel, he *endued* with his *Spirit*. This was eminently the case with Moses. When the seventy elders were appointed to assist Moses in his work, the LORD said : I will take “ of the spirit which is upon thee, “ and will put it upon them ; and they shall bear the burden of “ the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.” The Jews observe that the language here used does not suppose any diminution of the gifts of Moses. They explain it by the comparison of one candle being lighted at another, without any decrease of its light. As an evidence of their call to this work, “ the spirit rested upon them, and they prophesied.”^s When he raised up judges in succession, he qualified them for the work to which they were called by gifts of the Spirit. These gifts, although extraordinary, were generally of a civil or political nature. They were various, according to the exigencies of his people. Some were endued with a spirit of wisdom. Others were filled with extraordinary courage. Thus the Lord looked upon Gideon, and said, “ Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save “ Israel from the hand of the Midianites ; have not I sent “ thee ?”^t Samson and others he supplied with miraculous strength.^u When there was a call for it, as in preparing the tabernacle, extraordinary qualifications even in the mechanical arts were communicated. Thus the LORD said to Moses ; “ See, I “ have called by name Bezaleel, the son of Uri,—and I have filled “ him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, “ and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to de- “ vise cunning works.—And I, behold I, have given with him “ Aholiab, the son of Abisamach : and in the hearts of all “ that are wisehearted I have put wisdom, that they may make “ all that I have commanded thee.”^x

These extraordinary gifts especially prefigured the qualification of Christ, in his human nature, for the work of judging his people. On him did “ the Spirit of the LORD rest,” in all his gifts and graces ; “ the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the “ spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the “ fear of the LORD.” These extraordinary gifts, which were parcelled out among his types, are all united in him. They were conferred on others in a certain degree. To him the Spirit is not given “ by measure.” Others enjoyed the Spirit only occa-

^r 2 Sam. v. 6—8.

^s Numb. xi. 17, 25.

^t Judg. vi. 14.

^u Chap. xiv. 6 ; xv. 14.

^x Exod. xxxi. 2—6.

sionally. But he rests on the King of Zion. By means of them, he was fully qualified for the discharge of his work. For the Spirit "made him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD:" so that he "judges not after the sight of his eyes, nor reproves after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness does he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth."^y

These men of God, whom he raised up for judging Israel, especially prefigured the Messiah. But they might also, in an inferior respect, be figures of the ministers whom he employs in his kingdom. This idea seems agreeable to what our Lord promises to his apostles, that they should "sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."^z Their number, as judging the spiritual Israel, corresponded to that of the patriarchs, of the tribes which sprung of them, and of "the princes of the tribes, heads" or "governors of thousands in Israel."^a As it is said, that the Lord took of the spirit which was on Moses, and put it on the seventy elders; it is that Spirit, who rested on the New-Testament Mediator, who in his gifts and graces is communicated to his servants. As the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were various under the law, they have been no less so under the gospel. For, saith the apostle Paul; "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.—For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge by the same Spirit,"^b &c. Christ hath "given gifts unto men. He gave some, apostles: and some, prophets: and some, evangelists: and some, pastors and teachers." He confers these gifts for the benefit of his spiritual kingdom, of his "holy nation:"—"for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."^c In consequence of these gifts, the princes of his spiritual tribes are represented as judging his people. For in the sixty-eighth Psalm, which is an illustrious prophecy concerning the Saviour, he is first exhibited as "ascending on high, and receiving gifts for men." Then his people are described as assembling at Jerusalem, as "blessing God in the congregations, even the Lord from the fountain of Israel." In these assemblies, some appear distinguished above the rest. "There is little Benjamin with their ruler, the princes of Judah, and their council, the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali."^d It has been observed, that the tribes here mentioned are those from which the apostles were mostly, if not all, chosen. Benjamin, although the least of the tribes, is supposed to be first mentioned, because of the peculiar honour conferred on Paul, who was of this tribe. The Septuagint reads, "Benjamin, a young man, in an ecstasy." This is applied by some to Paul's being called, while yet a young man, or called last of the apostles, and to the miraculous manner in which he

^y Isa. xi. 1—4.
^z 1 Cor. xii. 4—8.

^z Mat. xix. 28.
^c Epi., iv. 8, 11, 12.

^a Numb. i. 16.
^d Psal. lxxviii. 2'.

was converted, as well as to the revelations which were afterwards made to him, when he was "taken up into the third heavens, and "heard things which it was not lawful for a man to utter." Others read the words ; "There is little Benjamin ruling them ;" and understand them as denoting that distinguished place conferred on him, as an instructor and ruler in the church of Christ, and as labouring more abundantly than all the apostles. "The princes of Judah and their council" are next mentioned. As our Lord came of this tribe according to the human nature, James the less, and the other apostles, called "the brethren of our "Lord," must also have belonged to it. Peter, Andrew and others, seem to be designed "the princes of Zebulun and Naphtali : " because they were called in the coasts possessed by these tribes.^e

5. They were bound to *consult* the LORD in all important matters of government ; and when they did so, he gave them *direction* in an extraordinary manner. The high-priest asked counsel by Urim and Thummim. Some render these words *Lights and Perfections* ; others, *Manifestation and Truth*. According to some interpreters, these terms merely denote the precious stones of the high-priest's breast-plate. Others view them as pointing out some particular ornament, distinct from the breast-plate itself, not formed by the hand of man, but given to Moses immediately by God. This seems to be the most probable opinion. For Moses is commanded to "put the Urim and "Thummim in the breast-plate of judgment ;"^f and in the account given of the consecration of Aaron, after we are informed that "Moses put the breast-plate upon him," it is added ; "Also "he put in the breast-plate the Urim and Thummim."^g There are also different views with regard to the manner in which the answer was given by God, when thus consulted by the high-priest. It is generally admitted, that dressed in his pontifical ornaments, he went into the holy place ; and standing immediately before the vail, with his face towards the holy of holies, proposed the question. It is the opinion of some, that the letters, contained in the breast-plate, which formed the words of the answer, were made to appear more bright than the rest, and as if raised above them. But it seems more probable, that this answer was given by a voice from the holy of holies. For it is called "inquiring at the *mouth* "of the LORD ;"^h and "inquiring at his *word*."ⁱ But whatever was the peculiar form of the Urim and Thummim, or the particular manner in which the answer was given ; the mystery has received its full accomplishment in our Lord Jesus Christ. He is our High-priest, who, as he bears the names of all his spiritual Israel on his heart before the throne of God, hath a fullness of

^e See Ainsw. on the place. Vitringæ Obs. Sac. tom. i. lib. 3. cap. 3.

^f Exod. xxviii. 30.

^g Lev. viii. 8.

^h Josh. ix. 14.

ⁱ 1 Kings xxii. 5.

Spirit adequate to all their possible necessities. He is "the true *Light*" of his church. He is also her *Perfection*. For "we are complete in him." He hath the light of all knowledge, and the perfection of all grace. He is "full of grace and truth." In him "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." He gloriously discovers his grace, in the manifestation of his truth. He is that "Holy One" of God, with whom his Thummim and his Urim continually are.^k

It seems to be generally admitted, that this solemn inquiry was not to be made for a private person ; but only for the king, the general of the army of Israel, or him on whom the charge of the congregation lay.

When any case occurred, in the management of their civil concerns, which had not been expressly provided for ; they were bound to ask counsel of their Supreme Ruler. Thus it was with respect to the sabbath-breaker. It had been previously declared by God, that every one who *defiled* the sabbath should be put to death,^l yet Moses put the transgressor in ward, till he should consult the LORD as to the manner of his death.^m No particular law had been given with respect to daughters inheriting after their deceased father. When, therefore, the daughters of Zelophehad applied for a possession among their brethren, Moses durst not decide according to the dictates of his own judgment ; nor might he refer the matter to the tribes. He "brought their cause before the LORD."ⁿ Thus the temporal rulers of Israel had not authority to make even what may be called by-laws.

It was not enough that any, whom God appointed as his deputies, had received a portion of the Spirit. They were not therefore to trust to their own judgment ; but in the management of Israel, in all difficult matters, to ask counsel of the LORD. Moses, in prospect of his own death, entreated that the LORD would "set a man over the congregation, who might go out before them, and go in before them, who might lead them out, and bring them in ; that the congregation of the LORD might not be as sheep which have no shepherd." The LORD answered ; "Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay thine hand upon him ; and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation : and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation—may be obedient," literally, "may hear." But was Joshua to trust to his own judgment, or even to those gifts of the Spirit he had already received ? No. In the whole of his public conduct, he was to act merely as the minister of God, and therefore to wait for his instructions :—"And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him, after the judgment of Urim before the LORD : at his

^k Deut. xxxiii. 8.

^m Numb. xv. 34, 35.

^l Exod. xxxi. 14 ; xxxv. 2.

ⁿ Chap. xxvii. 1—5.

"word," that is, at the word of the LORD, as delivered by Eleazar, "shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both "he," Joshua himself, "and all the children of Israel with him, "even all the congregation."^o

As Joshua, that is Jesus, typically bore the name of our Saviour; the former is here set forth as an illustrious type of the latter in his work. As the true Shepherd of Israel, he makes all his sheep to *hear* his voice. He "leadeth them out; and when "he putteth them forth, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him. They go in and out, and find pasture."^p The Spirit of the LORD rested on him, that his Israel might obey him. He "received from God the Father honour and glory, when there "came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my "beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; *hear* ye him."^q

Joshua could do nothing without Eleazar; that wherein the type fell short in the one, it might be supplied in the other. Jesus is both the leader of Israel, and that Counsellor who alone knows the will of the Father. In the character of Mediator, he manages all the concerns of the Church, "as the Father gave him commandment?"^r and the word of the LORD, as declared by him, is the only rule of faith and duty to all her members.

The vicegerents of JEHOVAH, in the government of Israel, could make war or peace, only at his command. Hence Joshua and the princes of Israel are blamed for making peace with the Gibeonites without "asking counsel at the mouth of the LORD."^s Nor durst they engage in war without his express commission. The Israelites were smitten before the Amalekites, because they went to battle without regard to the authority of their divine Sovereign.^t When engaged in war, they were bound to ask counsel as to every battle, and the very squadrons which were to go out. In the war against the Benjamites, we find their brethren inquiring; "Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the "children of Benjamin?" They afterwards made this inquiry, "Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease?"^u Sometimes their Sovereign particularly fixed the day of battle; as when he informed the tribes that "tomorrow he would deliver Benjamin into their "hand."^v Nay, he occasionally prescribed the very plan of attack. Thus, he ordered Joshua to "lay in ambush for the city" of Ai.^w When he had rejected Saul, he would not give him any answer.^x

While the Israelites were in the wilderness, the Angel-JEHOVAH, who manifested his presence in the pillar of cloud and fire,

^o Numb. xxvii. 15—21.

^q 2 Pet. i. 16, 17. comp. Mat. xvii. 5.

^s Josh. ix. 14.

^u Jud. xx. 18, 23, 28.

^w Josh. viii. 2.

^p John x. 3, 4, 9.

^r John xiv. 31.

^t Numb. xiv. 40—45.

^v Ver. 28.

^x 1 Sam. xxviii. 6.

directed them as to the whole of their course. To express the unparalleled relation which God sustained to this people, Moses thus addresses them: "The LORD thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp."^y To Joshua the Angel-JEHOVAH said, "As captain of the host of the LORD am I come."^z

Here we have a most lively representation of the peculiar state, of the distinguished privilege, and of the indispensable duty, of all the true Israel of God. His ancient people, as to their state, may especially be viewed both as sojourners and as warriors. It is the last of these characters which chiefly demands our attention here. Even in the wilderness, where the Israelites might seem secure from attack, they were to live in a military style. They pitched their tents in the form of a camp. The LORD was preparing them for a life of warfare. He calls his redeemed people to be soldiers. Moses and Aaron were commanded to "take the sum of all the congregation of Israel,—with the number of their names, every male by their poll: from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war." They were to "number them by their armies."^a Here we have a pattern of the tender care exercised by God with respect to his beloved Israel. Not only their persons, but "the very hairs of their head are all numbered."^b His ancient people were all numbered by their *armies*. This points out the work allotted to all the spiritual seed of Abraham. They are called to "fight the good fight of faith." Only the *males* were numbered. For the Lord requires that we should all be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Thus the church, in her travail, is represented as bringing forth a man-child.^c It is their distinguished privilege, that they enjoy the perpetual presence of the Angel of the Covenant. Whether his people are met together for worship, or elders are assembled for judgment; he affords them the ample consolation arising from his promise; "I am in the midst of you.—Lo, I am with you always."^d Are they sojourners? Every true Israelite can say with David, "I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner."^e

Here we also learn our duty. The Israelites could not make peace or war but at the pleasure of JEHOVAH. "He whom we serve, is the Prince of Peace." We must not attempt to make peace for ourselves. Any peace of our own, either as respecting God or conscience, would be dishonouring to him, and destructive to us. Our Sovereign saith, "*My* peace I give unto you."^f We can have no solid peace but that which he *creates*.^g Nor may we make peace with his enemies. We must have war with Amalek from generation to generation. We may not make

^y Deut. xxiii. 14.

^a Numb. i. 2, 3. See Ainsw. on the place.

^c Rev. xii. 5; Isa. lxvi. 7.

^e Comp. Psal. xxxix. 12, with Lev. xxv. 23.

^g Isa. lvii. 19.

^z Joshua v. 14.

^b Luke xii. 7.

^d Mat. xviii. 20; xxviii. 20.

^f John xiv. 27.

peace even with his friends, at the expense of truth ; but only " according to the word of the LORD." Are we called to a state of warfare ? We must endure " hardness, as good soldiers of " Jesus Christ." We must fight under no other banner than his. He is " the Captain" or " Prince of our salvation."^h In fighting against the world, the devil, and the flesh, we must still have our eye fixed on him. For it is he who " teacheth our hands to war." Were the Israelites to follow the Lord, and his tabernacle going before them, in their war against the inhabitants of Canaan ? Even so must we, in our spiritual warfare, " follow the Lamb " whithersoever he goeth."ⁱ We must beware of entering into the field of battle in our own strength. We can " fight the good " fight," only " by the word of truth, by the power of God, by " the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the " left."^k We must use every weapon, provided for us in the spiritual armoury, in the unremitted exercise of prayer. Therefore it is commanded, " Take unto you the whole armour of " God ;—praying always with all prayer and supplication in the " Spirit."^l In all our contendings for what we reckon truth or duty, we ought to be well assured that we are engaged in " the wars " of the LORD ;" and deeply concerned that we fight his battles with a right spirit, knowing that " the wrath of man worketh not " the righteousness of God." Ere we enter the field with our brethren in Christ, it should be our sincere and importunate inquiry at the throne of grace ; " Shall I go up to battle against " the children of Benjamin my brother ?"

6. JEHOVAH exercised his kingly power in the *protection* and *deliverance* of his people. Other kings, in order to the protection of their subjects, need in the first instance to be protected by them. For this purpose, guards and armies are requisite. This King alone gave protection to his people, without requiring any from them. Did he " walk in the midst of their camp ?" It was " to deliver them, and to give up their enemies before them."^m The pillar of cloud and fire, in which he went before them, was not only a symbol of his presence as a protector, but was itself a real defence. On the borders of the Red Sea, it " came between " the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel,—so that the " one came not near the other all the night."ⁿ It also protected them from the burning heat of the sun, in these parched deserts. Hence, it is recorded, as an evidence of the care of God with respect to his people, that " he spread a cloud for a covering."^o

Here we learn the unspeakable privilege of the kingdom of Christ. He who of old " walked in the midst of the camp" of Israel, " walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks ; " and holdeth the seven stars in his right hand."^p All true Is-

^h Heb. ii. 10.

^l Eph. vi. 13—18.

^o Psal. cv. 39.

ⁱ Rev. xiv. 4.

^m Deut. xxiii. 14.

^p Rev. ii. 1

^k 2 Cor. vi. 7.

ⁿ Exod. xiv. 20.

raelites are the "temple of the living God," concerning whom he fulfils that great promise, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."^q The Lord is to his Church "a wall of fire round about,"^r to protect her, and to consume her adversaries. That the pillar of cloud especially respected the privileges of the New-Testament Church, is evident from the application of the type in the language of prophecy: "The LORD will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day-time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain."^s Our Lord Jesus, who went before Israel in the typical cloud, defends his people from the rage of Satan, and the violence of their own corruptions; which, like the Egyptians, seek their destruction. He is also "a shadow from the heat" of persecution, or of any affliction which threatens to overpower them. The Israelites, after they were seated in Canaan, were surrounded by implacable enemies. But the LORD assured them, that no man should "desire their land," when they went up thrice a-year to appear before him in their solemn feasts.^t This same gracious Protector "creates a cloud upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion." Thus he affords the greatest encouragement to his servants and people, when called to wait on him in the duties of his institution; especially when the circumstances of their families, or their worldly concerns, present various difficulties, which unbelief and carnality may be eager to lay hold of, as insuperable bars in their way.

7. The King of Israel went up to *battle* on their head. The armies of Israel were "the host of the LORD."^u Balaam acknowledges, with respect to Israel, "The shout of a King is among them."^w This agrees with the promise which God had made to his people: "If ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies."^x When Abijah, the son of Rehoboam, drew up his army against Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, he thus addressed Jeroboam and all Israel: "Ye think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD in the hand of the sons of David.—Behold, God himself is with us for our Captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets, to cry an alarm against you. O children of Israel, fight ye not against the LORD God of your fathers, for ye shall not prosper."^y What was it that inspired the stripling David with such boldness, when he went out against the gigantic Philistine? "All this assembly," says he, "shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD's."^z It was he

^q 2 Cor. vi. 16.

^t Exod. xxxiv. 24.

^x Numb. x. 9.

^r Zech. ii. 5.

^u Josh. v. 14.

^y 2 Chron. xiii. 8, 12.

^s Isa. iv. 5, 6.

^w Numb. xxiii. 21.

^z 1 Sam. xvii. 47.

who protected his deputies, as he said to Joshua ; " Be strong, " and be of a good courage ;—for the LORD thy God is with thee " whithersoever thou goest."^a It was he, who delivered their enemies into their hands, or overthrew them, often without the stroke of a sword. The Egyptians, obdurate as they were, saw such clear evidences of divine agency, that they could not conceal their convictions : " Let us flee." they cried, " from the face of " Israel ; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians."^b When his ancient people were not blinded by ingratitude and unbelief, they in the strongest terms acknowledged the astonishing displays of his kingly power. They confessed not only the truth of this relation, but its permanency ; not only his inclination to deliver them, but his irresistible might. To ascribe unlimited power to an earthly sovereign, is at the same time to rob God, and to ridicule man, under the pretence of doing him honour. They ascribed this to their King, because they knew that he had every kind of salvation at command. " Thou art my king, " O God, command deliverances for Jacob."^c Literally, " Thou " art HE my king ;" that same glorious and powerful sovereign, who " drove out the heathen, and planted" our fathers.^d Elsewhere they celebrate his unchangeableness in this very language ; " Thou art *the same* ;" or " Thou art HE, and thy years shall " have no end."^e So fully was Moses convinced that the whole defence of Israel was owing to God, that he taught the people to praise JEHOVAH as their banner. For on occasion of the victory over Amalek, he built an altar, and called the name of it JEHOVAH-NISSI.^f

Jesus, in his spiritual kingdom, still appears as " the Captain" or " Prince of our salvation." In the book of Revelation, which is indeed " the book of the wars of the LORD," he appears as sitting " on a white horse," and as " in righteousness judging and making war." The armies in heaven follow him as their leader.^g From the whole tenor of this prophecy, it is evident, that the Church is indebted to him for all her victories. Therefore she still ascribes the whole of her salvation to Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb. When she triumphantly sings, " Now is come salvation and strength," we find that the only reason of her triumph is, that " now is come—the kingdom of our " God, and the power of his Christ."^h It is " the root of Jesse," who " stands for an ensign of the people."ⁱ By him, not only the Church in general, but every genuine member of it, is crowned with victory. Are his people assaulted by Satan, or by the working of their own corruptions ? He not only defends them, but makes them to tread down their enemies. They are taught by experience, that they are not sufficient of themselves. But " his " grace is sufficient for them ; his strength is made perfect in

^a Josh. i. 9.^b Exod. xiv. 25.^c Psal. xliv. 4.^d Ver. 1—3.^e Psal. cii. 27.^f Exod. xvii. 15.^g Rev. xix. 11. 14.^h Rev. vii. 10 ; xii. 10.ⁱ Isa. xi. 10.

"their weakness." Thus, often when they feel most of their own weakness, they have the fullest experience of the all-sufficiency of their Lord ; so that they can say with Paul, "When I am weak, then am I strong."^k They are not merely conquerors, but "more than conquerors, through him who hath loved them." They know that their king also discharges the office of a priest. He "sits as a priest upon his throne." In the battle with the Amalekites, it was only "when Moses held up his hand," that "Israel prevailed."^l Our King hath called us to a perpetual war with Amalek,^m with Satan, and the lusts of our own hearts. But we can prevail in this conflict, only as our New-Testament Moses holds up his hands, by interceding for us within the vail. He may suffer Amalek to prevail for a time.—But the victory is eventually secured to us. Satan may be allowed to "sift us as wheat." But our Mediator "prays for us that our faith fail not."

8. God would not permit his ancient people to adopt methods of defence, which implied confidence in an arm of flesh, or which might lead to this. Therefore, by Moses, he prohibits their future king from multiplying to himself horses, from causing the people to return to Egypt with this design, and from greatly multiplying silver and gold.ⁿ When they actually took this course, God denounced his judgments against them, and assured them of defeat by the very means which they employed for security. Thus he speaks by Isaiah : "Wo to them that go down to Egypt for help, and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many ; and in horsemen, because they are very strong : but they look not unto the holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD.—Now, the Egyptians are men and not God, and their horses flesh and not spirit ; when the LORD shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down, and they all shall fall together."^o By the pattern of this typical kingdom, the LORD instructs his church in the nature of her defence. He shews her the vanity, the iniquity, of trusting to an arm of flesh. He teaches her members to say ; "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses : but we will remember the name of the LORD our God." He enables them to believe, that in this way "the King will hear them when they call."^p Thus he informs us, that, as his kingdom is spiritual, its defence must be so also ; that his work is carried on, "not by might, nor by power, but by his Spirit."^q He teaches us also, that we are "not to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God ;" and that "the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word."

It was incumbent on the kings of Israel, by means of the tem-

^k 2 Cor. xii. 8—10.

ⁿ Deut. xvii. 15—17.

^p Psal. xx. 7. 9.

^l Exod. xvii. 11.

^o Isa. xxxi. 1, 3.

^q Zech. iv. 6.

^m Ver. 16.

floral sword, to furnish all who made innovations in religion, or otherwise transgressed the Mosaic law, even in things not immediately affecting civil society. This, however, did not properly originate from their office as civil rulers, but from the peculiarity of their character, as the immediate deputies of God, in the singular relation which he sustained to that people over whom they presided. This power was not the consequence of the choice of the people. For although their kings had actually been chosen by them, they could have had no right to invest them with a power of this kind. It was the fruit of the sovereign will of God, by whom their lawful kings were chosen. It constitutes no pattern for magistrates under the New Testament. For the power, in this respect, conferred on David and his successors in the kingdom, was strictly figurative of the power of that glorious Person, who should "sit on the throne of David to order and establish it." In him the type was to be perfectly fulfilled, and as it were absorbed; so that he should not henceforth employ any civil rulers in the same kind of work, because he was himself "to order and establish his kingdom—from henceforth even for ever."^r

If the character of these kings be a pattern for civil governors in our times, then it ought to be urged, that they have also a hereditary and indefeasible right; such a right, at least, that the family may on no account be set aside. Nay, with equal propriety might it be urged, that modern kings ought to be anointed with oil. Kings, under the law, were thus anointed, because they were immediately the vicegerents of God, whom he set "over his inheritance," "over his people," his "peculiar treasure;"^s and because they were typical of Him whom God hath *anointed* to be his king over his holy hill of Zion.^t The solemn unction of modern kings is not more absurd, than the idea of their possessing that power which is now confined to the illustrious Antitype.

It cannot justly be argued, that the judicial law is binding on Christians, because it was revealed by the only wise God, and must therefore be the best that can be devised. For it was a system adapted to the particular situation of Israel as under a theocracy, and to the typical character of that people in other respects. All that can therefore be justly inferred from its being given by God, is, that it was the best system which could be devised for that people in their peculiar situation. Such precepts of the judicial law as necessarily flow from the law of nature are still obligatory; because the law of nature ought to be the foundation of all national laws. But the formal reason of this obligation does not consist in their being embodied in the judicial law, but in their being taught by the law of nature.

The temporal punishments inflicted by the instrumentality of

^r Isa. ix. 7.

^s 1 Sam. x. 1.; xv. 1.; Exod. xix. 5.

^t Psal. ii. 6.

typical rulers, on account of transgressions in matters of religion, were themselves typical, either of the spiritual censures inflicted by the New-Testament Church, or of the eternal punishment of unbelievers, if not of both. It has been asserted by some learned writers, that the denunciation, so frequently repeated in the law, "That soul shall be cut off from his people," properly denotes the sentence of excommunication, as inflicted under that dispensation. They have supposed, that it solely respects a judgment to be immediately inflicted by God, in the case of transgressions of the law, of which there was no external evidence. But it is unquestionable, that in some passages it must be understood of temporal punishment, to be inflicted by the hand of man. Thus, with respect to the Sabbath, it is said, "Every one that defileth it, shall surely be put to death : for whosoever doth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people."^u The latter clause cannot be viewed as containing a reason for what is declared in the former ; unless it be supposed, that in every instance in which the sentence of excommunication was pronounced, it was to be succeeded by a violent death ; and this would prove, no less than the other interpretation, that, according to the Mosaic law, temporal punishment was inflicted, in various instances, where the transgression was properly in matters of religion. The meaning of this language evidently is, that the Sabbath-breaker should be cut off from among his people, by being put to death by the hands of men. For the second expression is merely expletive of the first.

It seems abundantly clear that this phrase did not refer to any ecclesiastical censure ; but signified that the transgressor should be punished with death, either by the power of the magistrate, when the crime was known ; or if the crime was hid from others, or overlooked by civil rulers, by the immediate judgment of God. This, indeed, is virtually admitted even by those who understand the expression as denoting excommunication. For it is said that this excision, in extraordinary cases, and particularly when men neglected to punish the offender, was the work of God, according to the threatening ; ^v " If the people of the land hide their eyes from the man, when he giveth of his seed unto Molech, and kill him not : then I will set my face against that man, and against his family ; and will cut him off."^w It is unreasonable to suppose that the very same phrase, when used to denote the judgment of God, should bear a sense so very different from that which belongs to it, as expressing what was required of man ; that in the one case it should signify nothing less than excision from the land of the living, and in the other merely excision from church membership. This is contrary to all the rules of sound criticism. The very passage quoted shows the falsity of the idea. For the expression *cut him off*, in the second

^u Exod. xxxi. 14.

^v Lev. xx. 4, 5.

^w Gillespies' Aaron's Rod, p. 44, 45.

clause, is equivalent to *kill him* in the first. And in the same sense must the phrase be interpreted elsewhere ; unless it can be proved that, when God is spoken of as the agent, it necessarily denotes a punishment entirely different from that which is meant when it expresses what he required of man.

This very phrase is used to denote the punishment of the greatest transgressions, as the worship of Molech, and crimes against nature. "For whosoever shall commit any of these "abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off "from among their people."^x From the more full declaration of the law with respect to one of these crimes, the horrid worship of Molech, we have a clear proof that cutting off a soul from his people denoted, either the work of the civil magistrate, or in case of his negligence, that of God himself : "Whosoever he "be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in "Israel, that giveth any of his seed to Molech ; he shall surely "be put to death ; the people of the land shall stone him with "stones. And I will set my face against that man, and will cut "him off from among his people : because he hath given of his "seed unto Molech, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my "holy name. And if the people of the land do any ways hide "their eyes from the man, when he giveth of his seed unto Molech, and kill him not : then will I set my face against that "man, and against his family, and will cut him off, and all that "go a-whoring after him, to commit whoredom with Molech, "from among their people."^y Death was still the punishment, whether God or man was the immediate agent. I do not reason from the particular nature of the crime : for in a civil point of view, as implying murder, it must still have merited temporal death. The argument is founded on the explanation of the language, by which the punishment is expressed. For, if in this instance it denoted death, it must be extremely difficult to prove that, as used with respect to transgressions of a less heinous nature, it bore a sense totally different.

The same expression denotes the punishment of some transgressions that immediately respected the ceremonial worship ; and is used in such connexion as to shew that temporal death is meant. This law was given to Israel ; "What man soever there "be of the house of Israel, that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat in "the camp ; or that killeth it out of the camp, and bringeth it not "to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer an "offering unto the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD ; "blood shall be *imputed* unto that man, he hath shed blood ; and "that man shall be *cut off from among his people*."^z This transgression is represented in the light of murder, and was to be punished in the same manner ; because the blood shed, although not that of a man, was notwithstanding blood devoted to an holy

^x Lev. xviii. 21—23, 29.

^y Lev. xx. 1—5.

^z Lev. xvii. 3, 4.

use. To this law it is thought there is an allusion in the language of the prophet ; " He that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man."z

The following seems to be the most plausible objection that has been made to this view of the phrase under consideration ; " He that in his uncleanness did eat of an unholy [i. holy] thing, was to be cut off ;a yet for such a one was appointed confession of sin, and a trespass-offering, by which he was reconciled and atonement made for him, as Mr. Ainsworth himself tells us on Lev. v. 2, whence I infer, that the cutting off such a one was not by death inflicted, either from the hand of the magistrate, or from the hand of God, but that the cutting off was ecclesiastical, as well as the reception or reconciliation."b This learned writer afterwards rejects the distinction made by Ainsworth between sins of ignorance or infirmity, and those that were wilful. But it is evident that the sins referred to, Lev. v. 2—4, are such as proceeded from ignorance. For when mention is made of a man touching any unclean thing, it is said, " And it be hid from him ;" and afterwards, " When he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty." In this case, atonement might be made. On the contrary, in the cases mentioned, Lev. vii. 20, 21, there is every reason to believe that presumption was supposed. For there is no limitation, as in the former instance ; and one of the cases specified,c could not be unknown to the person. When, therefore, with respect to any sin it is said, that the soul that committeth it shall be cut off, it appears that we are still to understand what is said as respecting a sin of presumption ; and to view the particular precept as explained by this general one ; " The soul that doth ought presumptuously,—shall be cut off from among his people : because he hath despised the word of the LORD."d This receives considerable light from the language of the inspired writer to the Hebrews, who uses the very term employed in this precept, and expressly points out the sense in which such transgressors were to be cut off : " They who despised Moses' law, died without mercy."g

It has been argued, indeed, that death could not be the punishment meant by this expression, because we have evidence from Lev. vi. 1—8, that even for wilful sins, immediately committed against the moral law, atonement might be made.h But from this exception, in some cases particularly stated, no good argument of a general nature can be deduced. The supreme Lawgiver had an unquestionable right, if he pleased, to relax the rigour of his law in some cases, although he did not in others. Certain it is, that we have no proof of any such relaxation, as to sins wilfully committed in regard to his worship. Under that

z Isa. lxvi. 3.

a Lev. vii. 20, 21.

b Aaron's Rod, p. 56.

c Lev. vii. 20.

d Num. xv. 30, 31.

g Heb. x. 28.

h Aaron's Rod, p. 56.

dispensation, God peculiarly manifested his jealousy with respect to his altar. And if he saw meet to admit of an atonement for transgressions of the moral law, and to prescribe none for presumptuous profanation of his worship ; we have no right to infer the one from the other, and still less to say unto him, What doest thou ?

The phraseology employed in the law, is transferred by the apostle to the Gentiles to the spiritual excision of those who trouble the kingdom of Christ, by the ecclesiastical sentence of excommunication. For, speaking of false teachers, he says, “ I would they were even *cut off* that *trouble* you.” That he refers to a spiritual sentence, to be inflicted by the Church, is evident from what he had said a little before : “ I have confidence “ in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded : but he that *troubleth* you, shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.”ⁱ And in the use of the term, expressive of the cause of this spiritual excision, he evidently alludes to those who, by any great transgression, had troubled Israel.^k

With respect to the false prophet, or the idolater, it is enjoined, that the congregation shall put him to death. “ So,” it is added, “ thou shalt put the evil away from among you.”^l The Greek translation renders this : “ Put ye away from among yourselves that wicked person.”^m This very language the Apostle Paul uses with respect to the excommunication of that church-member who had been guilty of incest : “ Put away,” he says, “ from “ among yourselves that wicked person.”ⁿ

From the severity of the punishments inflicted under the law, the inspired writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, pleads not for similar punishments, of a temporal kind, under the gospel ; but considers these as emblems of the far severer punishment to be inflicted on the finally impenitent. He argues from the less to the greater. “ He that despised Moses’ law, died without mercy, “ under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, “ suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under “ foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, “ wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done “ despite unto the Spirit of God ?” He gives not the remotest hint for the direction of church-members who might be invested with civil power in succeeding ages, that apostacy or other such crimes should be temporally punished. He refers the punishment of it to Him who hath said, “ Vengeance belongeth unto “ me ; I will recompence.”^o

ⁱ Gal. v. 10, 12. ^k Josh. vi. 18 ; vii. 25 ; 1 Chron. ii. 7.

^l Deut. xvii. 7. See also chap. xiii. 5.

^m Εξαρείς τον πονηρον εξ υμων αυτων.

ⁿ Εξαρείτε τον πονηρον εξ υμων αυτων. 1 Cor. v. 13.

^o Heb. x. 28—30.

SECTION III.

The Covenant made with the Israelites ;—their Adoption,—Separation,—Sojourning,—and Sufferings.

VIII. THE ancient Israelites were a people in covenant with God.—It is not meant fully to enter into that difficult question, which has been much agitated even among sound divines, Whether the covenant made at Mount Sinai was merely a legal dispensation of the covenant of grace, or a covenant of a temporal nature, different from the covenant of grace, and peculiarly adapted to the state of the Church during that period. It is evident that this transaction, however it be denominated, did not, and could not disannul that “covenant which was confirmed before of God in Christ,”ⁿ when the promise was made to Abraham and to his seed. It is no less evident, that the Sinaitic covenant or dispensation was given in direct subserviency to the covenant of grace, and to the clear and glorious revelation of it under the New Testament. Nor can it be doubted, that believers in every age, even under the law, were saved in a way substantially the same with that revealed in the gospel, by virtue of the covenant of grace made known to the patriarchs.

Considerable difficulties attend the determination of this question. Yet such modes of expression are used in Scripture, concerning the covenant made at Mount Sinai, as cannot well be consistently understood, unless it be viewed as something more than a mere difference of dispensation. To prove this, various arguments have been brought, which merit our serious attention, and the exercise of an impartial judgment. It may be proper to exhibit some of these as briefly as possible.

1. The Sinaitic covenant is distinguished from the other as to its *date*. While it is asserted that the covenant of grace was “confirmed before of God in Christ ;” the Apostle of the Gentiles reminds the Galatians, that “the law was given four hundred and thirty years after.”^q Moses, speaking of this law, under the denomination of a covenant, denies that it was made with the patriarchs. “The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb ; the LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us.”^r Is it likely that such language would have been used, had the difference consisted merely in form ?

2. The law is spoken of as *added*, for a special reason, and for a certain time, to the covenant made with Abraham ; and therefore as something different in its nature. It is even described by the apostle, as possessing such characters that men might be apt to view it as “against the covenant,” and as tending

ⁿ Gal. iii. 17.

^q Gal. iii. 15—17.

^r Deut. v. 2, 3.

to "disannul" it. While he teaches that the law was given in subserviency to the covenant of grace, he admits that it was so different, that it could not give life, because this comes only by a free and gracious promise.^s Now, if the law or Sinaitic covenant included the covenant of grace as its principal substance, only under a darker form; how is the law contrasted with the promise? how could Paul say, "If the inheritance be of the law, it is "no more of promise?"

3. These two are pointed out, not merely as different dispensations, but as different *covenants*: "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt, (which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD.)" The same contrast is stated in the account given of the allegorical meaning of the history of Sarah and Hagar; "These are the two covenants." The covenant of grace is not here contrasted with that of works made with Adam, but with that peculiar covenant made with Israel at Sinai:—"The one from the Mount Sinai,—which is Agar."^u

4. The superior excellency of the ministry of Christ, is proved from his being "the Mediator of a *better* covenant; of the *new* covenant."^v This covenant is expressly said to be *better*, as being "established upon better promises." Now, if there be a difference as to the promise, there must be a difference between the covenants to which they respectively refer: because the promise is to be viewed as an essential part of a covenant. The promises, on which the covenant at Sinai was established, although figurative of better blessings, in themselves respected those that were *temporal*. They immediately referred to the possession of the land of Canaan, to the victory over external enemies, to abundance of earthly good things, to long life and prosperity in the course of obedience. These promises were also *conditional*. Their fulfilment was suspended on the obedience of the covenant people. "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people."^w This is the general strain of the promises made in this covenant. Even that promise respecting God's relation to them, is conditionally expressed: "If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people."^x But the promises of the new covenant, as they are spiritual, are absolutely free. Their spirituality appears from the summary given of them, Heb. viii. 10—12, especially as including the writing of

^s Gal. iii. 17—21.

^t Jer. xxxi. 31, 32.

^u Gal. iv. 24.

^v Heb. viii. 6; xii. 18, 24.

^w Exod. xix. 5.

^x Lev. xxvi. 3—12.

the law, not on tables of stone as formerly, but on the fleshly tables of the heart ; and the great blessing of pardon, not as consisting in the removal of external and ritual guilt, or deliverance from the punishment connected with it, but in a complete deliverance from condemnation. All these promises are expressed absolutely, so that their fulfilment depends not on any thing to be done by us. On the contrary, they secure strength for the performance of duty.

5. The Sinaitic covenant tended to produce a *servile* spirit. "The one from the Mount Sinai—gendereth to bondage."^y It has been observed, that the apostle does not here speak of the abuse of that covenant, as indeed it was greatly abused by the generality of the Israelites, as if it had been meant to ensure eternal life, on the ground of their obedience ; but of its native tendency, which was to produce a servile frame of spirit, entirely different from that which is the fruit of the covenant of promise.

6. This was a covenant that might be *broken*. "They continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord."^a This language has no respect to the change of dispensation. It denotes, that such was the frame of that covenant, that God might be provoked by the transgressions of the Israelites, to cast them out of it. This was actually done with respect to the ten tribes. Now, the covenant was thus broken, and those who were once within it, were cast off by God, many centuries before there was any change of the dispensation.

7. When the Israelites, in different instances, obtained the forgiveness of their breach of covenant, it was not in consequence of any mercy reserved for them in the transaction at Sinai, but by a gracious recurrence, on the part of their offended Lawgiver, to the *covenant* which he made with their *fathers*. On this ground alone does he promise to visit them in the day of their calamity. "If they shall confess their iniquity,—then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember, and I will remember the land."^b Moses, in his intercession for the Israelites, when they had greatly provoked God by worshipping the golden calf, does not ground his plea on the covenant recently made with them at Mount Sinai, but on that with their ancestors : "Turn," he says, "from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever."^c And God's respect to

^y Gal. iv. 24.

^a Heb. viii. 9.

^b Lev. xxvi. 40—42.

^c Exod. xxxii. 12, 13.

this covenant is given as the reason of all that longsuffering which he exercised towards Israel, amidst their aggravated iniquities : " The LORD was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet."^d

It must be remembered, however, that this, which is called the *old* covenant, was not given to Israel as a covenant of works, promising eternal life for *their* obedience. As to their external state, they were previously under the covenant of grace. Even the Sinaitic covenant contained a typical revelation of redeeming mercy, a thing totally unknown to the covenant of works. Had this been its nature, there could have been no salvation for any who were under it. As, according to the letter, it promised temporal mercies, it figuratively exhibited those which are eternal ; and was thus given in subserviency to the covenant of grace. With respect to the temporal mercies themselves, the reward was promised only on condition of obedience. In this sense it was the language of that covenant, " The man that doth " these things, shall live in them." But in as far as this declaration may be viewed in relation to spiritual and eternal blessings, it could only refer to Him who was meritoriously to fulfil the precept, as well as to sustain the curse. Our Lord as the true Israel, that servant whom God had chosen, took up in behalf of his spiritual seed, that engagement into which Israel in general entered with a legal and presumptuous spirit, saying, " All that " the LORD our God hath spoken we will do." When they were brought to make this promise, the intention of God was very different from theirs. It was, however, obscurely revealed in that very covenant to which they consented. In consonancy to the gracious design of God, as we know that the head and the members constitute one Christ,^e in many passages of the Old Testament, the language is cast into such a mould, as apparently to respect both the literal Israel, and the promised seed that was to spring from them. Hence it seems difficult to interpret it of the one, to the exclusion of the other.^f

The covenant at Mount Sinai, indeed, appears to have been made with the Israelites, especially in relation to the suretyship of Christ. It was necessary that it should be made with Israel, that the Messiah, who was to descend from Abraham, might be under the law, in its whole extent, as a covenant. For as he could not redeem, without being our kinsman, as partaking of the same nature ; how could he redeem those that were under the law, without being so near of kin to them as to be himself made under it with the same latitude ? It is evident, from the Apostle's reasoning, that the law under which Christ was made, was not merely the moral law in the form of a covenant, but the

^d 2 Kings xiii. 23. ^e 1 Cor. xii. 12. ^f See Isa. xlii. 19—21 ; Hos. xi. 1.

whole of the Mosaic law. He was not only to redeem his elect in general from the curse of the covenant which had been broken in Adam, but his elect among the Israelites from all the bondage under which they were by virtue of the covenant made at Mount Sinai, and for ever to free his Church from this yoke.^g

This covenant was not “dedicated without blood. For when “Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to “the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water and “scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all “the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which “God hath enjoined unto you.”^h But “the blood of calves and “goats could not take away sin.” It “sanctified only to the pu- “rifying of the flesh.”ⁱ It could only remove that legal uncleanness which debarred an Israelite from the ordinances of the church under that dispensation. It had, in itself, no virtue for real purification. All its worth, in this respect, consisted in its typifying the blood of Jesus the true sacrifice. Thus, how mean soever the legal oblations were in themselves, they were highly estimable, in as far as they shadowed forth that infinitely precious blood by which the new covenant is confirmed.

The Israelites cheerfully assented to the covenant which God made with them. They “entered into covenant with the LORD “their God.”^k They “avouched the LORD to be their God, “and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes.”^l Some think, that, because of the peculiarities of that dispensation, they could not prefigure Christians in this transaction. But whether the Sinaitic transaction be viewed as a peculiar covenant, or only as a peculiar dispensation of the covenant of grace; as the Israelites were still under the covenant made with their fathers, and as that very transaction at Sinai ultimately respected the blessings purchased by Christ; they, in their consent to this covenant, as far as they acted according to the proper design of it, prefigured the church of Christ under the New Testament, in her cordial acceptance of the covenant of grace, and her engagement to be the LORD’s. For even the covenant of grace requires, on the part of believers, a restipulation as to the performance of duty. Such language, to some, has a legal sound. But there is nothing legal, in our engaging, with all possible solemnity, to walk in God’s ways and to keep his commandments. Our acceptance of the New Covenant necessarily implies such an engagement. When God promises to be to us “God,” he requires of us, that we be to him “a people.” Then only can we be chargeable with legality, when we enter into such an engagement in our own strength, or view our obedience as a condition of our enjoyment of the blessings of this gracious covenant. We cannot “cleave to the

^g Gal. iii. 24; v. 1—5. comp. See this subject largely and judiciously handled in Petto’s *Difference between the Old and New Covenant*. p. 84—188.

^h Heb. ix. 18—20.

ⁱ Heb. ix. 13.

^k Deut. xxix. 12.

^l Deut. xxvi. 17.

"LORD," without "full purpose of heart."^m But this purpose must rest solely on promised grace.

There were, indeed, some things peculiar in the manner in which the Israelites entered into covenant. Particularly, as this engagement respected all the laws given them, not merely moral and ceremonial, but judicial: it undoubtedly respected the Israelites themselves, not merely as a religious, but as a political body. While they entered into covenant as a church, they did so also as a state. They acknowledged JEHOVAH, both as their God, and as their King: They promised obedience to him, not only in spiritual, but in all political concerns. This covenant, then, viewed in one light, was their national oath of allegiance.

From this peculiarity of their circumstances, some have inferred that such engagements are entirely inconsistent with the state of Christians. Others going nearly to an opposite extreme, have urged from the example of Israel, that it is the duty of Christians, even in their various civil stations, and as conjoined in civil and political societies, to "swear to the LORD of hosts." But it has been seen, that the Israelites, in their mixed character, as "an holy nation," were not typical of any particular nation or political body, under the New Testament; but that this character is exclusively transferred to the Church of Christ. Hence it follows, that it is only in a religious character, or as members of the spiritual "commonwealth of Israel," that this duty is obligatory in our times. When the churches of Macedonia "gave their own selves to the Lord," they did so entirely in an ecclesiastical capacity.ⁿ Did literal Israel prefigure the church, in their relation to God as their King? What is this duty, but the church's solemn recognisance of her subjection to the King of Zion, and of her cheerful submission to all the laws of his kingdom? And surely, if earthly sovereigns have a right to demand an oath of allegiance from their subjects, the "King of saints" hath infinitely greater right to make this demand upon his.

ix. God admitted his ancient people to the distinguishing privilege of *sonship*. He expresses the peculiar dignity of Israel in this relation, by an allusion to the right of primogeniture among men. He gives us to know that the reason of his unexampled severity in the last plague which he sent on the Egyptians, was their cruelty towards a people who were so dear to him. Hence he commands Moses to deliver this message to Pharaoh: "Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my first born. And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold I will slay thy son, even thy first born."^o He declares that the redemption of Israel from Egypt was the fruit of his paternal love to that people, while yet in their infancy as a nation; "When Israel was a child then I loved him, and called my son out of

^m Acts xi. 23.

ⁿ 2 Cor. viii. 5

^o Exod. iv. 22, 23.

"Egypt."^h "To them pertained the adoption."^g In this privilege they prefigured the spiritual Israel, the true Jacob and all his seed. The peculiar honour of primogeniture is ascribed to the Head of the mystical body, who must "in all things have the pre-eminence." To him is that language applied, "Out of Egypt have I called my son."^r He is God's "first-born," whom he hath made "high above the kings of the earth,"^s—"the first-born among many brethren." But great also is the honour of all the members of his body. For by virtue of their predestination, they are eventually "conformed to the image" of the first-born.^t "As many as receive him, to them gives he power to become the sons of God." The birth, by which they are admitted to this dignity, is truly of the most noble kind. They "are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."^u His ancient people had no natural claim to the signal honour to which they were advanced. In like manner, all the true seed are admitted to the privilege of sonship by adoption. By nature we are "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise." Well, therefore, may we cry out in the language of astonishment; "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon *us*, that *we* should be called the sons of God!"—"Upon *us*," who are not only orphans, but vagabonds; not only aliens, but rebels and enemies! Still more reason have we to admire the love of our heavenly Father, when we consider the infinite expense that was necessary for procuring this honour. For "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,—that we might receive the adoption of sons."^v

How many privileges were connected with this of adoption, in the experience of Israel! What care did he exercise towards them in their infant state; nay, during the whole time of their continuance in his family! All the finest and most delicate resemblances in nature are employed to express the tenderness of his parental love. Not only did he raise up Moses, to "carry Israel in his bosom, as a nursing-father beareth the sucking child;"^w but he himself exercised this tender care. "The LORD their God bare them, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that they went."^x "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him."^y A woman might "forget her sucking-child, so as to have no compassion on the son of her womb." But the LORD never forgot his people. "I taught Ephraim to go," he says, "taking them by their arms."^z Thus our compassionate Lord, when he reflected on the innumerable evidences of his love to his

^h Hos. xi. 1.^s Psal. lxxxix. 27.^v Gal. iv. 4, 5.^y Deut. xxxii. 11, 12.^g Rom. ix. 4.^t Rom. viii. 29.^w Numb. xi. 12.^z Hos. xi. 3.^r Mat. ii. 15.^u John i. 12, 13.^x Deut. i. 31.

ancient people, "all the days of old," as well as those they had received during his personal ministry, wept over Jerusalem, and addressed that city in these affecting terms; "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,—how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."^a

The evidences of his love to his spiritual Israel are by no means inferior. He hath indeed "graven" his church "on the palms of his hands."^b He hath given a most affecting answer to that prayer which she so long presented; "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm."^c Our High-priest hath graven us on his heart, in the print of the spear, and on his hands, in "the print of the nails" by which he was fixed to the accursed tree. It is therefore impossible that he can forget his church. Her *walls*, all her interests, "are continually before him." For he perpetually bears these impresses of his love to her, even in his glory. He is therefore represented as bearing the likeness of "a Lamb, as it had been slain."^d He "feeds his flock like a shepherd; he gathers the lambs with his arm; he carries them in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young."^e "As one whom his mother comforteth," saith he, "so will I comfort you."^f

Did not God feed his typical children by an uninterrupted miracle for forty years, in a land that was not tilled nor sown? He rained manna from heaven on them. He turned the flinty rock into a spring of water. Was it ever heard, that any other people were fed from heaven? Never, but with respect to the true Israel, who "all eat the same spiritual meat, and drink the same spiritual drink;" who all "eat of the hidden manna," of "the bread which cometh down from heaven," and "drink of the water of life."^g When God fed his ancient people in this miraculous manner, it was with a design to teach them, that there are means of life unspeakably superior to those which are necessary for the mortal part. He "fed them with manna, (which they knew not, neither did their fathers know,) that he might make them know, that man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord."^h For in this consisteth "the life of the spirit." By means of that heavenly manna, which is rained around their tents, are all the spiritual Israel made to live.

Did he not extend his miraculous power to their clothing? During forty years, their "raiment waxed not old, nor did their shoes wax old on their feet."ⁱ But great as the effect of this miracle was, it was merely an emblem of that durable clothing which is communicated to all the seed of Jacob. They are cov-

^a Mat. xxiii. 37.

^b Isa. xlix. 16.

^c Song viii. 6.

^d Rev. v. 6.

^e Isa. xl. 11.

^f Isa. lxvi. 13.

^g Rev. ii. 17; xxi. 6.

^h Deut. viii. 3.

ⁱ Deut. xxix. 5.

ered with "a garment of salvation, a robe of righteousness," which can never decay. The righteousness, which Messiah the Prince hath brought in for them, is everlasting.^k "In his days—" Israel dwells safely;" for "this is his name, *ИЕHOVAH* OUR "RIGHTEOUSNESS."^l They can never "perish from the way," nor can they ever entirely fail in it: for their feet are "shod" "with the preparation of the gospel of *peace*."

The Israelites were not only "nourished" by God, but "brought up" as "children."^m He trained them up under the pedagogy of the law. They were "under tutors and governors, till" "the time appointed of the Father." Their education was severe, but God saw it to be necessary. Are not all the seed of Israel trained up by him as a father? Is it not the privilege of the Church, that "all her children are taught of God?" Often indeed their discipline in the school of adversity is very severe, as may appear more fully afterwards. But he makes "all things" "to work together for their good."

x. The posterity of Jacob were a people *separated* by God for himself. It was not the consequence of their own choice, that they were so remarkably distinguished from the world. God claims this work as his. "I am," saith he, "the LORD your God, which have separated you from other people."ⁿ He erected a partition-wall between them and all other nations. They were hedged in by a peculiar discipline. Circumcision, and the other rites of the ceremonial law, rendered them odious and contemptible to the nations around. Hath not God thus separated that people whom they prefigured? The work is not theirs. They would never leave the world, were they not "chosen out of it," and "called by his grace." What the law was to the Jews, the unadulterated doctrine of the gospel is to Christians. It is a wall of partition between them and the world. Literal circumcision was never more contemptible in the eyes of carnal men, than is the scriptural doctrine of the circumcision of the heart. All true Christians have the same experience with the apostle Paul. By the cross of Christ "the world is crucified" "to them, and they are crucified unto the world."^o

His ancient people were separated for the most important ends. The LORD set them apart to be "a peculiar treasure unto him" "above all people," and to be "an holy nation."^p We have seen, that these very characters are conferred on his believing Church under the New Testament. This consists of a people separated unto holiness. Surely, then, those deserve not the name of Christians, who are unwilling to be reckoned *peculiar*, to be distinguished from the men of this world. Many are well enough pleased to be called Christians, who will not bear the

^k Dan. ix. 24.

ⁿ Lev. xx. 24.

^l Jer. xxiii. 6.

^o Gal. vi. 14.

^m Isa. i. 2.

^p Exod. xix. 5, 6

yoke of Christ. They cannot submit to any restraint upon their conduct. They wish to live as others do. They carry their regard to Christianity no farther, than as it allows them to be "conformed to this world." But to all such Christ will certainly say, "Depart from me; I never knew you."

The Israelites were also separated to the enjoyment of the promises. To them "pertained the promises." Now, although "the promise is to all," in respect of the external offer, and the warrant which every one who hears the gospel has to believe; yet those, who are Israelites indeed, alone have a personal interest in it; they only, "as Isaac was, are children of the promise."

The carnal Israelites were separated in a special respect, because Christ was to descend from them according to the flesh. This is mentioned as their distinguishing privilege.^g Still greater is the honour of spiritual Israelites. They constitute Christ mystical.^r They are the fulness of Him "that filleth all in all." They are all members of his body; nay one spirit with him.

For this very end did God redeem the posterity of Jacob, that they might be separated as a peculiar people to himself. He "brought them out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance."^s By this redemption, it is said, he "confirmed to himself his people Israel, to be a people unto him for ever."^t For the self-same end hath he redeemed his Church, by an infinitely greater price. Our Lord Jesus Christ "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works."^u Thus he confirms us to himself. We are "not our own, but bought with a price;" therefore we are bound by the strongest ties to "glorify him in our bodies and spirits which are his." To pretend to be a Christian, and yet to be habitually conformed to this world, is a direct contradiction. It is to deny the very end of the death of Christ. It is to deny the whole design of our Christian calling, which is to accomplish a separation from "this present evil world."

Often did God remind the Israelites of their separation from every other people. He still exhibits their peculiarity of character as a signal honour. In this sense it becomes matter of promise: "The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations."^v It is the will of our God that we should still remember, that although *in*, we are not *of*, the world. With this view he gives us many warnings in his word. He knows how prone we are to follow the multitude. Therefore he says, "Be not conformed to the world." He assures us, that "the friendship of this world is enmity with God;" and that

^g Rom. ix. 5.

^t 2 Sam. vii. 23, 24.

^r 1 Cor. xii. 12.

^u Tit. ii. 14.

^s Deut. iv. 20.

^v Numb. xxiii. 9.

“whosoever will be the friend of this world is the enemy of God.” Our carnal hearts at times recoil at the idea of this separation. It seems hard that we should “dwell alone.” But he teaches us, that this is both our honour and our interest. “Blessed are ye,” saith our divine Saviour, “when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man’s sake.” He does not propose motives for comforting us under this as a heavy trial. He calls us, on the contrary, to view it as ground of spiritual joy. “Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for behold, your reward is great in heaven.”^w Thus he teaches us to “rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.”^x

xi. The Israelites were called to a life of *sojourning*. During forty years they wandered in a waste and howling wilderness; although the journey from Egypt to Canaan might have been accomplished in a few days. How fitly does this represent the state of spiritual Israel. Here we “have no continuing city.” We are “pilgrims and strangers.” This world is to us a wilderness. Hence it is called “the wilderness of the people.”^y It can afford no rest to the soul. Were the Israelites exposed to many dangers in that “great and terrible wilderness,” in which they sojourned so long; to hunger, to “fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought?”^z Was it “a land of deserts and of pits, and of the shadow of death, a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt?”^a What a striking emblem have we here of the real state of this world! It contains no food for the immortal part. When “the poor and needy seek water, there is none; and their tongue faileth for thirst. Hungry and thirsty their soul fainth in them.” The men of this world sharpen “their tongues like a serpent.”^b “Their poison is like the poison of a serpent.”^c The children of God “dwell among scorpions.”^d How often are they stung by those more dangerous serpents that lodge in their own bosoms, by those lusts which seek their destruction.

The Israelites dwelt in tents or tabernacles, not in fixed dwellings. Our life is like theirs. Soon must “the earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved.” But we look for “a building of God,” “a city which hath foundations.”

Were the Israelites called to pass *through* the wilderness, in order to reach the land of Canaan? This is the very representation given of the Church. “Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, like pillars of smoke?”^e Some think that there is here an allusion to the pillar of cloud; others, to the smoke of incense, as expressive of the exercise of all true Christians, whose affec-

^w Luke vi. 22, 23.

^z Deut. viii. 15.

^c Psal. lviii. 4.

^x Acts v. 41.

^a Jer. ii. 6.

^d Ezek. ii. 6.

^y Ezek. xx. 35, 36.

^b Psal. cxi. 3.

^e Song iii. 6.

tions habitually ascend towards heaven. The Israelites were regulated in all their journeys by the pillar of cloud. "When the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed; and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents. At the commandment of the Lord the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the Lord they pitched; as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle, they rested in their tents."^f This shews what the Lord requires of us. In every step of our journey through life, we ought to seek divine direction. Therefore it is written: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In *all thy ways* acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."^g For this reason the Church is described as coming up from the wilderness, "leaning on her beloved."^h

When the Israelites had already passed through the wilderness, and come to "the mount of the Amorites," a part of the inheritance which the Lord had given them; and when he commanded them to go and take possession, they so provoked him, that he caused them to return "by the way of the Red Sea."ⁱ They had been formerly baptized here, and they are sent back to its typical waters. Thus does the Lord often deal with his spiritual Israel. They for a time make such advances in religion, as to seem to be on the very borders of the heavenly Canaan. But to chasten them for their transgressions, he throws them farther back into the wilderness. They entirely lose sight of the promised land, and perhaps call in question the truth of the promise. Or they virtually doubt the power of a promising God; and seem to think, that because of the might of their foes, he is not able to give them admission. The Lord sends them back "by the way of the Red Sea." He calls them to the renewed exercise of faith, and of that evangelical repentance, of which baptism in the Red Sea was merely a figure. He commands them to "remember from whence they have fallen, and to repent, and to do the first works."^k

Not only did the situation of the Israelites, while in the wilderness, prefigure our state of sojourning in this world; but even their fathers, while living in Canaan, are represented in the same light. Abraham "sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise."^{*} All the patriarchs "confessed

^f Numb. ix. 17, 18, &c.

^g Prov. iii. 5, 6.

^h Song viii. 5.

ⁱ Deut. i. 20, 21; ii. 1; Numb. xiv. 25.

^k Rev. ii. 5.

* M. Fleury has an observation on the habitations of the patriarchs; which, from its ingenuity at least, merits our attention. Speaking of their custom of dwelling in tents, he says, "It more particularly pointed out the state of the patriarchs, who inhabited this earth only as sojourners; waiting for the promises of God, which could not be accomplished till after their death. The first cities that we read of, were built by the

that they were strangers " and pilgrims on this earth."ⁿ They confessed this both by their profession and by their practice. Those who truly feared God, even after they were fixed in the land of Canaan, considered themselves still as strangers. Let us hear the confession of David. " I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were."^o Or, as he elsewhere expresses the character of the whole Church : " We are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers ; our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding."^p Here he evidently refers to a singular ordinance, by which God would constantly remind his people, even when settled in the land of Canaan, and by them remind us of the uncertainty of all earthly enjoyments, and of the necessity of desiring a better country. " The land," he saith, " is mine, for ye are strangers and sojourners with me," or " before me."^q Some understand this expression *with me*, as if it meant that JEHOVAH himself was only a sojourner in this world ; and that all his people were called to sojourn with him. Thus some of the ancient Jewish writers give the following gloss : " Ye are strangers and sojourners with me. " It is enough for the servant that he be as his master."^r

In this earth we are all strangers of necessity ; let us be so of choice. Let it be our supreme desire, that we may be *strangers with God*, enjoying his company in the wilderness, and having " our affections set on things above." It is a small matter though we be estranged from all the world, if we enjoy his blessed fellowship. Our lot can never be worse than that of our JEHOVAH incarnate, who " had not where to lay his head." So far from being ashamed of our character, let us earnestly endeavour that our whole life may be one continued confession of it. When in danger of dejection, let us cheerfully sing those songs which are given for our comfort " in the house of our pilgrim-age."^s As strangers and pilgrims do not wish to entangle themselves with what would retard their progress, let us still remember the tender language of the apostle Peter : " Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."^t

XII. The Israelites were called to a life of *trial*. In their very cradle, as a nation, they were inured to adversity. For hundreds of years were they afflicted in Egypt. When leaving it, they seemed to be given up as a prey to their enemies. But even after passing

ⁿ Heb. xi. 9, 13.

^q Lev. xxv. 23.

^s Psal. cxix. 54.

^o Psal. xxxix. 12.

^r See Ainsw. on the place.

^t 1 Pet. ii. 11.

^p 1 Chron. xxix. 15.

" wicked, by Cain and by Nimrod.† These were the first who inclosed " and fortified themselves ; not only that they might escape the punishment of their former crimes, but that they might commit others with impunity. Good men lived without inclosures, and without fear." Moeurs des Israelites, chap. ii..

† Gen. iv. 17. ; x. 10.

through the Red Sea, their trials appeared only to commence. For "they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. "And when they come to Marah, they could not drink of the "waters of Marah for they were bitter."^u Like them the spiritual children of Abraham have scarcely passed through the Red Sea, ere they are called to encounter new trials. They taste of "the wormwood and the gall."^v The only way in which it was possible to sweeten the waters of Marah, was by casting into them a tree that JEHOVAH shewed to Moses.^w This is generally viewed as a figure of the cross of Christ. This tree, which bore only gall and wormwood to him, brings sweetness to us. It often changes the taste, and it always changes the nature, of the waters of affliction. It removes from them all the bitterness of the curse. Though they should be "bitter in the mouth," it renders them "sweet in the belly." Though "no affliction be for "the present joyous, but grievous; in the *end* it worketh the "peaceable fruits of righteousness."

The whole period of Israel's sojourning in the wilderness was marked by affliction. He led them forty years "in the wilderness—to prove them."^x In like manner, God calls his people to a *life* of affliction. He assures us, that "through much tribulation we *must* enter into the kingdom;"^y that this course is indispensably *necessary*, according to his unalterable will and purpose; and that it is thus appointed, as a mean of making us "meet to be partakers of his inheritance." He displays much sovereignty as to the nature and degree of that affliction which he apportions to his children. Some are afflicted far less severely than others. "But what child is there whom the "father chasteneth not?" As he proved his people by one kind of food for forty years, he requires of all Christians that they be denied to themselves, renounce carnal enjoyments, and "mortify their "members which are on the earth." He visits them with affliction for this very reason, that he may give them a greater relish for the bread of life. Often does he chasten them for their want of appetite for this, by making their soul to "lothe all manner of "earthly food."

Even when God brought the sons of Jacob into Canaan, he did not drive out all the inhabitants of the land, but left some of them, that they might be "as thorns in their sides," and that "they "might prove Israel."^z Accordingly, when his people were disobedient, he delivered them into the hands of their enemies. Well might Israel say, "Many a time have they afflicted me "from my youth."^a That same God, who hath given a mortal blow to corruption in the hearts of all his redeemed, could easily deliver them at once from all the power of their lusts. But in his infinite wisdom, he perceives it to be more for their advantage,

^u Exod. xv. 22, 23.

^x Deut. viii. 16.

^a Psal. cxxix. 1.

^v Lam. iii. 15, 19.

^y Acts xiv. 22.

^w Exod. xv. 25.

^z Judg. ii. 3; iii. 4.

that they be tried by their spiritual enemies. He "slays them" not, lest his people should forget ;" but gradually "brings them down."^b In fatherly displeasure, he often chastens the Christian for one sin, by leaving him to commit another. He makes his "own wickedness to correct him, and his backslidings to reprove him ;" and thus causes him to "know and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that he hath forsaken the LORD his God."^c

We learn from various parts of the Old Testament, and especially from the book of Judges, how the LORD dealt with Israel. When they departed from him, he gave them up into the hand of the Midianites, or of the Philistines, or of some other neighbouring nation. No sooner did they return to him, than he granted deliverance. Thus he treats his spiritual children. If they forsake his law, he "visits their iniquities with rods, and their sins with stripes." But when they return to him in the way which he hath appointed, "he sends forth his word, and heals them, and delivers them from all their destructions." "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."^d

In a word, all the affliction with which God visited his people, was ordered for their good. Thus Moses instructs Israel, when about to pass over Jordan : "Thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no." And afterwards ; "Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God,—who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end."^e Our merciful God hath no pleasure in afflicting his people. He intends only our profit. It is his will to *humble* us. He does not need to afflict us, that *he* may know what is in our hearts. But it is his pleasure to know this experimentally, that he may communicate this important knowledge to us. Although he "knows our thoughts afar off," we refuse to credit his testimony concerning our hearts. He therefore supplies us with evidence from facts. All this is meant to humble us. He requires that, in consequence of a comparison of our conduct with his, we should entertain the most self-abasing thoughts concerning ourselves. By this course of discipline he prepares us for unmixed "good at our latter end." For he means to bring us "through fire, and through water, unto a wealthy place."

^b Psal. lix. 11.

^c Jer. ii. 19.

^d 1 John i. 9.

^e Deut. viii. 2, 3, 11, 16.

SECTION IV.

The Israelites called to a Life of Faith.—Their Murmurs and Rebellions.—The Judgments inflicted.—Display of Pardoning Mercy.—Entrance into the Land of Promise.

XIII. THE Israelites were called to a life of *faith*. Of this a variety of evidence might be produced. But the truth of the assertion will be abundantly evident, if we merely consider the way by which they were called to enter into the wilderness, the nature of their life there, the manner in which they were brought out of it, and their security for the possession of Canaan, and victory over its inhabitants. God commanded them to enter into the wilderness by passing through the Red Sea. Mere reason could discover no way in which this command could be obeyed. But the obedience of Israel, in this respect, is ascribed to faith. "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land : " which the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned." *f* It is not meant, that all who thus *passed through* were true believers. The great body of that people gave many affecting evidences of the contrary. But they had such a temporary faith, as was necessary to make them trust themselves on a path that had never been trode by man before. God had sometimes required a faith in his power, in that person on whom a miracle was to be wrought, although this faith was not saving in its nature. In like manner, the Israelites had, in this instance, a persuasion of the power of their God, which was sufficient for the end in view ; a persuasion which the Egyptians had not, and could not have, because they had not the word of God, neither his word of precept, nor of promise, as their warrant. Therefore, while the Israelites were saved, the Egyptians were drowned. They *assayed* the same conduct, but by no means on the same ground.

Does not God in like manner call his spiritual seed to enter into their state of pilgrimage ? Does he not by a similar course convert this world into a wilderness to us, and cause us to enter on our journey to that " mount which his right-hand hath pur-
" chased ?" He brings all his people through the deeps of the sea. They are " born again of water and of the Spirit." As in the waters of the Red Sea the Israelites were " baptized unto
" Moses ;" so we are " baptized into Jesus Christ,—buried with
" him by baptism unto death,—that we may walk in newness of
" life." *g* We are " buried with him in baptism, wherein also we
" are risen with him, through the *faith* of the operation of God." *h*

The Israelites were called to live by faith as to their daily support in the wilderness. We have already seen, that they

f Heb. xi. 29.

g Rom. vi. 3, 4.

h Col. ii. 12.

were miraculously fed. But this is not all that deserves our attention here. They had their food from day to day. Except for the sabbath, they were never to reserve any of their manna for the next day.ⁱ They were to depend on the same almighty hand which fed them to-day, to supply them to-morrow. While this teaches us a constant dependence on our heavenly Father, even for temporal support, and illustrates the folly and ingratitude of indulging anxious thoughts; it especially exhibits the manner in which we are called to lead our spiritual life. That grace, which we have received to-day, will not suffice for to-morrow. It will be as useless as the manna, that was kept over-night, which "bred worms and stunk." The moment we trust to grace already received, through our corruption it breeds the filthy worm of spiritual pride; and this will cause all our exercise to send forth "a stinking savour." Like the Israelites, every day must we look to heaven for another shower of the spiritual manna. In this sense, must we supplicate our Father for "our daily bread." We must not think to feed on Christ in us; but look by faith for "that bread which cometh down from heaven," which still *cometh* in the dispensation of the word, and in the renewed communications of his Spirit. Thus will our strength be "renewed day by day." The promise points out no other course; "As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

How were the Israelites called to terminate their sojourning in the wilderness? It was in a way similar to that in which it was begun. In leaving Egypt they had passed through the Red Sea; and they could not enter the promised land, without passing through Jordan. In both cases, it was necessary that they should "believe in JEHOVAH." This teaches us how the Christian finishes his course in this wilderness. It is just as he begun it,—by faith. What is said of the Patriarchs, applies to all true Christians: "These all died in faith."^k The Israelites might not enter Jordan, till the ark of the covenant went before them. As soon as the priests, who bare it, touched the waters with the soles of their feet, Jordan was divided, and its waters stood on heaps.^l Now, it is only by the eye of faith, fixed on Jesus, who is both our New-Testament ark and priest, that we can safely enter into Jordan. It is our consolation, that he hath gone into the terrible river of death, and passed through before us. This alone can make our passage safe. The eye of faith must be directed to Jesus, as "the living One, who was made dead,"^m that he might deliver us both from the power, and from the fear of death. Through his death, indeed, we have the most ample ground of assurance that death can do us no injury. He hath not only gone through Jordan before us, but he passes through it with every true Israelite. God expresses his promise of deliverance to his spiritual Israel, by an evident allusion to the great temporal deliverances wrought for his ancient people, at the Red

ⁱ Exod. xvi. 19. ^k Heb. xi. 13. ^l Josh. iii. 11, 13. ^m Rev. i. 18.

Sea, and at Jordan : “ When thou passest through the waters, I “ will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not over- “ flow thee.”ⁿ Although death should seem to be armed with many terrors, we have no reason to be afraid. It was the will of God, that at the very time that his people had to pass through Jordan, it should overflow all its banks.^o But when it made the most threatening appearance, it was just as easy for him to dry up its waters, as if they had been confined in their ordinary channel. This very circumstance affords ground for a most comfortable promise : “ Surely in the floods of great waters they shall “ not come nigh unto him.”^p It was because the Lord had taken to himself the character of a Redeemer, that he did not suffer Israel to perish in the Red Sea, or by the swellings of Jordan : and his church has the most ample security, from his still sustaining the same character, only in a more exalted sense. Does he say to her, “ When thou passest through the waters I “ will be with thee,” what is the reason ? “ For I am the Lord “ thy God, the Holy one of Israel thy Saviour.” He calls to remembrance the former displays of his power and love, as an argument for renewed displays of the same kind ; “ I gave Egypt “ for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast “ precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have “ loved thee : therefore will I give men for thee, and people for “ thy life.”^q

What was the security given to the Israelites for the possession of Canaan ? It was the promise of their God. How were they to conquer a people more numerous and stronger than themselves, and defended by “ cities walled to heaven ?” To faith alone was victory exhibited. The destruction of Jericho, upon the entrance of Israel into the promised land, was merely a prelude of the means by which they were to obtain victory. “ By “ faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed “ about seven days.”^r Hence we learn, how we are to obtain possession of the heavenly Canaan, and to be victorious over all our enemies. It is only by faith : and thus we shall be “ more than “ conquerors.”—But on this part of the subject we mean to offer a few thoughts afterwards.

xiv. In the history of the Israelites, we have a most affecting account of their multiplied *murmurings* and *rebellions*, and a most striking display of divine *longsuffering*. They had seen all the wonderful works of God in Egypt. Yet “ they provoked him at “ the sea, at the Red Sea.”^s They contemptuously said to his servant Moses ; “ Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast “ thou taken us away to die in the wilderness ?”^t They had scarcely passed through the Red Sea, ere they murmured for want of bread, saying to Moses and Aaron, “ Would to God we

ⁿ Isa. xliii. 2.

^o Josh. iii. 15.

^p Psal. xxxii. 6.

^q Isa. xliii. 2—5.

^r Heb. xi. 30.

^s Psal. cvi. 7.

^t Exod. xiv. 11.

“ had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when
 “ we sat by the flesh-pots, and did eat bread to the full : for ye
 “ have brought us forth unto this wilderness, to kill this whole
 “ assembly with hunger.”^u So carnal were the hearts of this
 people, that they reckoned the lot of heathens preferable to theirs.
 In the madness of their rebellion, they seem willing to die by the
 immediate stroke of divine vengeance, if they might die with a
 full belly. God gave them “ bread from heaven ;” but so far
 were they from being satisfied, that their “ soul loathed that light
 “ bread.”^v They wished for water ; and when they found it,
 they murmured because it was bitter.^w They afterwards mur-
 mured for flesh.^x They murmured against Moses and Aaron,
 because of the peculiar honour God had conferred on them.^y God
 gave the most signal evidence of his indignation, by making the
 earth to open and swallow up Korah, Dathan, and their company.^z
 But the people, instead of being humbled on account of their ag-
 gravated guilt, converted this very dispensation into a new argu-
 ment for rebellion. “ On the morrow, all the congregation of
 “ the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against
 “ Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord.”^a—
 “ The soul of the people was much discouraged because of the
 “ way.” Therefore “ they spake against God, and against Mo-
 “ ses.”^b They murmured at the report of the spies.^c “ Yea,
 “ they despised the pleasant land.”^d They generally directed
 their murmuring immediately against the servants of God : but
 it was really aimed against himself, and he always viewed it in
 this light. “ I have heard,” he says, “ the murmurings of the
 “ children of Israel, which they murmur against me.”^e Some-
 times they sought no cloak to their guilt. “ They made a calf in
 “ Horeb,” in that very place where they had seen the glory of the
 Lord, and heard his voice out of the midst of the fire. “ They
 “ changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth
 “ grass.”^f They were afterwards “ joined to Baal-peor” in his
 abominable worship, and “ did eat the sacrifices of the dead.”^g
 The whole time of their sojourning in the wilderness is repre-
 sented as one continued *provocation*. “ Forty years long,” saith
 God, “ was I grieved with this generation.” This obdurate and
 rebellious people, not only during their continuance in the wil-
 derness, but during the whole period of their peculiar dispensa-
 tion, were a perpetual monument of divine *longsuffering*. It was
 only because He, with whom they had to do, was “ God and not
 “ man,” that they were not totally destroyed. Yet so wonderful
 was their obduracy, that on one occasion they murmured at this
 very longsuffering, and expressed their regret that they had not

^u Exod. xvi. 3.^v Num. xxi. 5.^w Exod. xv. 24.^x Num. xi. 4.^z Num. xvi. 31—33.^a Ver. 41.^c Num. xiv. 2—4.^y Num. xvi. 1—3.^b Num. xxi. 4, 5.^e Exod. xvi. 7, 8 ; Numb. xiv.^d Psal. cvi. 24, 25.^g Num. xxv. 3 ; Psal. cvi. 28.^f Psal. cvi. 19, 20.

perished with others by the stroke of divine judgment. "Would God," do they say, "that we had died when our brethren died before the LORD."ⁱ

When you read the history of this people, are you filled with horror at their aggravated guilt? Do you accuse them as the most ungrateful, obdurate, and rebellious people who ever existed? Are you amazed at such a continued exercise of longsuffering towards them? You flatter yourselves, perhaps, that had you seen the miracles which they saw, had you received such signal deliverances as were wrought for them, you would not thus have "requited the LORD as a foolish and unwise people." But let the man, who thinks in this manner, review his past conduct; let him look into his own heart. The people of Israel were "our types." The sins that they committed, were figures of those with which we are chargeable.^k We are that Israel who "tempt and prove" God, even while we "see his works." We are the ungrateful and rebellious people, who grieve his Spirit. I speak not of those who are only nominal Christians, but of the true Israel of God. Have not *we* "provoked him at the sea, at the Red Sea?" Even at the very time that he was about to bring us out of Egypt, and to deliver us from the dominion of our spiritual foes, have we not "rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit," and to the utmost of our ability resisted his operations? How often have we "provoked him in the wilderness," even after so great a salvation? With respect to temporal enjoyments, how often have we "limited the Holy One," and virtually said, "Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?" When seeking our spiritual bread, have we not murmured at the difficulties in our way; or rebelled against the sovereign will of God, because this bread was not given in the manner or measure that we wished or expected? Has not the food of our souls been frequently loathed by us as "light bread?" Carnal enjoyments, alas! have seemed to possess charms unknown to a spiritual life. Our souls have envied the prosperity of the wicked. We have virtually said, "It is vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance?"^l How often have we complained because the waters of Marah were bitter; asserting, perhaps, that no child of God was ever afflicted as we have been! Our chastisements have seemed heavier than our iniquities deserved. How often do Christians murmur against the servants of God, even when engaged in the faithful discharge of the trust committed to them? How often by despising them, have we "despised Him that sent" them? Their honesty in delivering God's message has perhaps been ascribed to ill humour; or the faithful exercise of discipline, to partiality.

When considering the various hardships and trials in our *way*

ⁱ Num. xx. 3.
^l Mal. iii. 14.

^k Vid. Claude, *Oeuvres Posthumes*, Tom. ii. p. 153, &c.

to the promised rest, the many windings in our course, hath not our soul, on many occasions, been "much discouraged?" We have been in danger of entirely disbelieving the promise, and of concluding that God meant to leave us to perish in the wilderness. Because of our severe warfare with our spiritual enemies, we have been ready to say; "We are not able to go up against this people, for they are stronger than we."^m We have discredited the report, not of men like ourselves, but of God "who cannot lie," concerning the promised land.

How often have we been chargeable with spiritual idolatry, in making a god of this world? By inordinate love to this or that worldly enjoyment, we have "changed our glory into the similitude of an ox." Did the Israelites commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab? We also have merited the character of "adulterers and adulteresses," by seeking "the friendship of this world;" and by holding "fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness," instead of "reproving" them.ⁿ What is such conduct in Christians, but to the utmost of their power to renounce Jesus their only Lord and leader; and in effect to say with the rebellious Israelites; "Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt?"^o

Let us then return all that indignation, which we feel in reading the history of Israel, against ourselves. Let us acknowledge, with deep abasement of soul, that we are the rebellious people who have "tempted and proved" God in the desert. Let us admire that unspeakable patience, which from day to day is exercised towards us; and confess that "it is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, and because his compassions fail not." Let us earnestly pray, that we may be enabled more constantly and obediently to hear his voice, and be preserved from "hardening our hearts, as in the provocation."

xv. The Israelites were severely punished for their iniquities, by various judgments inflicted immediately by the hand of God. Several of these are enumerated by the apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians. Speaking of that obdurate people, he says; "But with many of them God was not well pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murder ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them

^m Num. xiii. 31.

ⁿ James iv. 4.

^o Num. xiv. 4.

"for ensamples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."^{*f*}

We may perceive a peculiar propriety in this enumeration.—For the church of Corinth was at this time in a very corrupt state. Many of her members were chargeable with iniquities of the same kind with those committed in the wilderness, or that bore a striking similarity to them; and the whole church was corrupted by the toleration of this "old leaven." They "lusted after evil things," by shewing such a regard to their bellies, as to eat in the temple of idols. Thus also were they contaminated with idolatry. For they "partook of the cup of devils." As prostitution was one of the rites by which the heathens served their idols in their very temples, it is not improbable that some of the Christians had been enticed in the same manner as the Israelites were by the daughters of Moab. We are assured, at any rate, that there was "fornication among them, and such fornication as was not so much as named among the heathen."^{*g*}—"Envy, strife, and divisions" prevailed, as if Christ himself had been divided.^{*r*} One adhered to Paul, another to Apollos, a third to Cephas. Thus, their conduct bore a remarkable resemblance to that of the Israelites, when they murmured against the servants of JEHOVAH, when they "envied Moses in the camp, and Aaron the saint of God."^{*s*} By these iniquities they "tempted Christ," as the Israelites had done in the wilderness.

The apostle evidently exhibits the Israelites both in their *sin* and in their *punishment*, as ensamples, figures or types to the Corinthians, and in them to all the professors of Christianity. He applies his doctrine from example, by warning the Corinthians against complying with temptation, against falling into sin.—"Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he also fall.—Wherefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry."^{*t*}—Afterwards, he applies his doctrine in regard to punishment, with a special respect to the profanation of the Lord's supper. "For this cause," he says, "many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."^{*u*} It is supposed that at this time an epidemical disorder prevailed at Corinth, which had cut off many of the members of the church; and that Paul, by the Spirit of inspiration, ascribes this visitation to the Lord's displeasure because of their corruptions. There is no reason to doubt, that many of the Israelites who were in a gracious state, joined in murmuring in the wilderness, and fell by the temporal stroke of fatherly indignation. The language of the apostle clearly implies that this was the case at Corinth. He speaks even of real believers. This appears, not only from the term used to express their death, as it is common in Scripture to describe the death of believers as merely a *sleep*; but also from what is added with respect to this

^{*f*} 1 Cor. x. 5—11.

^{*s*} Psal. cvi. 16.

^{*g*} Chap. v. 1.

^{*t*} 1 Cor. x 12, 14.

^{*r*} Chap. i. 10—13; iii. 3—5.

^{*u*} Chap. xi. 30.

temporal judgment; "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."^v Although thus severely *judged*, yet it was in a fatherly way, as a mean of preserving from eternal condemnation.

It is generally considered as one circumstance in which the new dispensation differs from the old, that it is marked with far less severity. Not only "did every transgression," which came under the cognisance of men, according to the law of Moses, "receive a just recompence of reward;" but innumerable crimes were punished immediately by the vengeance of God. Although, however, the tokens of divine vengeance, are neither so common, nor in general so striking, we are by no means to suppose, that the Supreme Lawgiver hath bound himself up from giving peculiar displays of his displeasure against an offending church, or offending church-members, even in a temporal respect. The warnings of the Spirit, directed to the Corinthians, and the account which the apostle gives of the effects of fatherly indignation, plainly prove the contrary. Our Lord threatens some of the seven churches of Asia with temporal calamities; and we cannot imagine that he would have signalized his vengeance in so awful a manner, in the very dawn of Christianity, by the immediate destruction of Ananias and Sapphira; had he not meant to teach us, that "the provocations of sons and of daughters" are not less offensive to his infinite holiness now, than they were under "the ministration of condemnation;" and that although the sword of justice more seldom destroys, it never sleeps in its scabbard. Had we such an interpreter as Paul, we might be assured, in particular cases, that the affliction and death of church-members, the devastation which disease makes in churches and families, were the tokens of divine displeasure for this or for that transgression. We have at least one general principle by which we may form a judgment, however cautious we ought to be as to the particular application. Even under the New Testament, in consequence of the fatherly indignation of God, "many have been weak and sickly, and many have slept." And can any good reason be given, why, under the same dispensation, notwithstanding the difference as to time, similar transgressions may not procure similar judgments?

The inspired writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, having recalled to their remembrance the awful displays of vengeance made under the Mosaic dispensation, and pointed out from a great variety of arguments the necessity of a stedfast adherence to Christ and to those ordinances he had instituted; enforces his exhortation by this impressive consideration, "For our God is a consuming fire."^w This language has undoubtedly a principal respect to the unspeakably "sorer punishment" of them who despise the gospel, as compared with that of those who "despised

"Moses' law." But there is every reason to believe, that the inspired writer had his eye also directed to those immediate tokens of vengeance, which were inflicted under the law, when God's fury broke forth like fire ; especially when we compare this with the passages formerly quoted.

So much was God displeased with that stiff-necked generation which left Egypt, as to swear that none of them, except two persons who had the distinguishing character of having "followed the LORD fully," should enter into his promised rest. Therefore he cut them all off in the wilderness, save Caleb and Joshua. They, who had impiously said, "Would God we had died in this wilderness,"^x were, in righteous judgment, taken at their word. Their punishment, while meant to warn us of the danger of temporal indignation, is at the same time exhibited as an example of an exclusion unspeakably more to be dreaded, an exclusion from the heavenly Canaan : "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."^y Was it because of unbelief that they could not enter ?^z This affords a powerful argument against the same sin in those who enjoy the gospel, especially as their guilt must be unspeakably aggravated above that of the Israelites, whose privileges were far inferior. Did God swear that they should not enter Canaan ? How certain, then, is the exclusion of all the finally unbelieving from that "rest which remaineth for the people of God !" Their destruction is ratified with the same solemnity as the salvation of his people. That unchangeable faithfulness which secures the one, in like manner secures the other. He, who hath "sworn by his holiness, that he will not lie unto David," that he will "establish his seed for ever," hath also sworn, with respect to all who continue in unbelief, that "they shall not enter into his rest."

xvi. The Israelites were a people whom God distinguished by his *pardoning mercy*. When we consider the unrelenting rigour of the law of Moses, and the superadded punishments inflicted immediately by God, it may seem at first view, that not one ray of mercy illumined this dark dispensation. But if we take a narrow view of the history of Israel, it will appear in the clearest light, that "mercy rejoiced over judgment." Such, as we have already seen, was the obduracy, and so many were the murmurings and rebellions of that people, that they were perpetual monuments of divine longsuffering. But this is not all. They were not merely monuments of signal longsuffering. God made them partakers of his pardoning mercy in a twofold respect. To many of them he communicated pardon as a special and saving benefit. He also pardoned Israel as a people.

God judged it necessary for the vindication of his honour, that

x Num. xiv. 2.

y Heb. iv. 1.

z Heb. iii. 19.

all who had in any way joined in rebellion, should die in the wilderness. From this temporal judgment he did not save his own beloved children. Miriam the prophetess, and Aaron "the saint of God," because they had associated with others in rebellion, must be partners in their fate.^a Even Moses, "the man of God," was permitted to see the promised land only at a distance, because he also had transgressed.^b Thus, although he "was a God that forgave them," by delivering them from the obligation to eternal punishment, which all sin merits; yet "he took vengeance on their inventions."^c Dear as many of their persons were to him, he testified his displeasure at their sins, by including them in the common calamity of those who "were overthrown in the wilderness."

The Israelites were also a pardoned people. It is not meant that they were all, as individuals, justified in the sight of God; or that they were individually preserved from temporal judgments. But, in their collective capacity, they were delivered from that immediate and total destruction which their iniquities deserved. This God threatened at different times. When they had made and worshipped the golden calf, the LORD said to Moses; "I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation."^d When they murmured at the report of the spies, and proposed to make them a captain, that they might return into Egypt, the LORD said to Moses; "I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation, and mightier than they."^e Moses entreated that God would not kill all that people as one man; and that he would "pardon their iniquity, according to the greatness of his mercy." His prayer was accepted, and JEHOVAH answered, "I have pardoned according to thy word."^f God consented to pardon Israel, *according to* the word of Moses, that is, according to the meaning of his prayer. He engaged that he would not destroy that people "as one man," or totally cut them off from being a nation; while he at the same time sware, that the generation which had come out of Egypt should perish in the wilderness.^g It is in this sense that the church celebrates his pardoning mercy, after enumerating the most striking instances of provocation in the wilderness: "But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not; yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath."^h He is extolled as "full of compassion," because strict justice demanded the total excision of a people so obstinately and universally rebellious; who were neither subdued by the most tremendous judgments, nor allured by the greatest mercies.

^a Num. xx. 1, 24.

^b Deut. iii. 26.

^c Psal. xcix. 3.

^d Exod. xxxii. 9, 10.

^e Num. xiv. 12.

^f Ver. 15—29.

^g Ver. 21—24.

^h Psal. lxxviii. 38.

The pardoning mercy of God is represented as continually exercised towards Israel, notwithstanding their continued provocations. Thus Moses prays, "Pardon the iniquity of this people.—" as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt, even until now."ⁱ For the same reason Nehemiah, when confessing the sins of Israel, thus addresses JEHOVAH; "But thou art a God of pardons, "gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, "and forsookest them not."^k

The pardoning mercy of God is described as extending to all their provocations: "Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin."^m Even Balaam was convinced of this. Hence, under the influence of the Spirit of inspiration, he breaks out in that striking language; "He hath not "beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in "Israel."ⁿ This, as applicable to ancient Israel, is not to be understood absolutely, but in relation to the end which Balaam and Balak had in view. It was the earnest desire of both to have Israel cursed. But God had not so "beheld iniquity" in his people, as to bring perdition on them as a nation. The language has no respect to their own merit; but signifies, that he hid his face from their sin. Many a time might he have "beheld iniquity;" but he "looked not to the stubbornness of this people, nor "to their wickedness, nor to their sin."^o

The pardon of this people was so secured to them, that they could not by any means be deprived of it. Balaam tried sacrifice and divination against them, but in vain. After all his attempts, he finds himself under the necessity of uttering this reluctant confession; "Surely, there is no enchantment against Jacob, "neither is there any divination against Israel; according to this "time it shall be said of Jacob, and of Israel, What hath God "wrought?"^p

The pardon of Israel as a people still respected God's covenant. He "looked not at their iniquity," because he "remembered his "servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."^q He manifested himself to be "a merciful God," who did not "forsake them, neither destroy" them; because he did "not forget the covenant of "their fathers, which he swore unto them"^r

The pardon of Israel still related to a Mediator. The forgiveness of all their transgressions as individuals, where the law had prescribed an atonement, could be expected only through the blood of those sacrifices which God had instituted. On the great day of atonement, the guilt of the whole congregation of Israel was to be expiated by blood.^s Thus, when the church extols the mercy of God in the forgiveness of her multiplied provocations in the wilderness, she expresses herself in language that bears a

ⁱ Num. xiv. 19.

ⁿ Num. xxiii. 21.

^q Deut. ix. 27.

^k Neh. ix. 17.

^o Deut. ix. 27.

^r Deut. iv. 31.

^m Psal. lxxxv. 2.

^p Num. xxiii. 23.

^s Lev. xvi. 16—34.

manifest allusion to that mercy-seat which interposed between Israel and the condemning law : " He being full of compassion, *"mercifully covered their iniquity."*^t But God permitted the imperfection of the legal dispensation to appear in this, that there were various transgressions for which it provided no expiation. In the case of rebellion against God, atonement was made in another way. Moses appears as an intercessor. He goes immediately into the divine presence. When the Israelites had worshipped the golden calf, he said to them ; " Ye have sinned " a great sin : and now I will go up unto the LORD : peradventure I shall make an atonement for you."^u God had given a signal proof of his approbation of the conduct of Moses, in proposing to make of him a great nation instead of Israel. This good man makes no other use of his own favourable acceptance with God, than to employ it as a plea for the pardon of that guilty people. " If now I have found grace in thy sight, (O LORD, let " my Lord, I pray thee, go amongst us, (for it is a stiff-necked " people,) and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for " thine inheritance."^v He acted the same part, when they rebelled on occasion of the report of the spies. In both these instances his intercession was accepted.^w When the Israelites rebelled on account of the destruction of Korah and his company ; the plague, which immediately broke forth among them, was stayed only in consequence of the high-priest's making atonement by incense.^x

In a word, God continued to favour his people with his gracious presence, as a token of forgiveness. The want of this was the evil with which he threatened them, when they " changed their " glory into the similitude of an ox." He had formerly promised that his Angel should go *with* them, that they should enjoy his own presence, in being directed and protected by " the " Angel of his presence." Now he only speaks of sending his Angel *before* them. It would seem that Moses understood this with respect to a created angel. At any rate, he knew that he could not conduct the people without the divine presence. As a pledge of pardon, God answered his supplication in these words : " My presence shall go with thee." When Moses received this gracious promise, he thus expressed his sense of its inestimable value ; " If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence. " For wherein shall it be known here, that I and thy people have " found grace in thy sight ? Is it not in that thou goest with us ?"^y Balaam also appeals to the divine presence in the midst of Israel, as the great evidence of their iniquity being pardoned. " He " hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverse- " ness in Israel : the LORD his God is *with* him and the shout of a " king is *among* them."^z

^t Psal. lxxviii. 58. ^u Exod. xxxii. 30.

^w Exod. xxxiii. 17 ; Num. xiv. 20.

^y Exod. xxxii. 34 ; xxxiii. 14—16.

^v Exod. xxxiv. 9.

^x Num. xvi. 48.

^z Num. xxiii. 21.

Israel, in the enjoyment of pardon, prefigured the spiritual children of God. To them "the longsuffering of God is salvation." They are the blessed persons "whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is covered." But although a pardoned people, they are still chargeable with provocation. Their gracious God, however, "multiplies to pardon."^a If we view the guilt we have been daily contracting in relation to God as a Father, since we were interested in the blessing of justification, we will find abundant reason to adopt the prayer of Moses concerning ancient Israel; "Pardon,—as thou hast forgiven from Egypt, even until now."

How unspeakable is our privilege, in having *all* our iniquities blotted out! When we look to ourselves, we can scarcely perceive any thing but guilt, aggravated guilt. Our sins appear far more heinous, and more highly aggravated, than the sins of those who never had any interest in pardoning mercy. But when we turn our eye to the free and gracious promises, we see that our God will not cast us off on account of our iniquities. We even hear him saying, "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee." Did he view us as in ourselves, he would every day see guilt sufficient to cause our eternal condemnation. But as he still views us as one in law with his true Jacob, with his servant Israel in whom he is glorified, and as covered with the spotless garment of his righteousness; he sees "no iniquity nor perverseness" in us. We also discern that this pardon is irreversible; that whatever attempts Satan or our own corruptions make against us, they are all in vain. For "God is for us," and "who can be against us? It is God that justifieth, and who is he that condemneth?" He hath pronounced a gracious sentence of acquittal in our favour; and "according to this time it shall be said, What hath God wrought?" Even our enemies shall be forced to say, with Balaam; "He hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it."^b He may, and he often does, visit the iniquities "of his people with rods, and their sins with stripes." Sometimes he gives them signal marks of fatherly anger, "taking vengeance on their inventions." But he never takes his love from them.

Our pardon is secured by the everlasting covenant; and represented as its great and comprehensive blessing. "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel and of Judah in those days, saith the Lord; I will be merciful to their unrighteousnesses, their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."^c It was only in the way of Moses making an atonement for the Israelites, that God forgave them. In like manner, pardoning mercy is extended to us only through the Mediator. "In him we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."^d God, having accepted Moses, heard

^a Isa. lv. 7. ^b Num. xxiii. 20. ^c Heb. viii. 10–12. ^d Eph. i. 7.

him in his intercession for Israel. Now we are accepted only "in the beloved." Through the incense of the merit of our glorious High-priest, we are delivered from that destruction to which we have been subjected by sin. Well may we say, "Look not upon us, for we are black : " but " see O God, our shield, " and look on the face of thine anointed."

Nor does the blessing of pardon come alone. It has many peculiar blessings in its train. Particularly, it is our privilege to enjoy the presence of our reconciled God. " Being justified,—we " have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and " rejoice in hope of the glory of God."^e

xvii. God at length brought his ancient Israel into the *land* which he had promised to give them for a possession. This was a type of that " better country," which is the object of desire to all the people of God. It is called God's rest. It was that place which he had provided for rest to the Israelites, after their tedious sojourning in the wilderness. How sweet will the heavenly rest be to all the true Israel, after their many toils and troubles, their fears and fightings, their sins and sorrows in this state of imperfection ! There shall they rest from all the evils of life ; from all personal and family afflictions, from all the power of temptation, from the raging of their corruptions, from the hatred of the world, from all fears of death and of the curse.—" The ransomed of the Lord shall—come to Zion with songs, " and with everlasting joy upon their heads : they shall obtain " joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."^f

We have seen that the ancient Israelites had to enter on their pilgrimage in the wilderness by passing through the Red Sea, and to finish it by passing through Jordan. When God brings his spiritual children through the Red Sea, he makes them to " pass from death to life ; " and by means of Jordan, he completely delivers them from " the body of death," and causes them to " enter into life."

It was the same people collectively, whom God had brought out of Egypt, who entered into Canaan. But they were entirely changed as individuals, except in the case of two persons ; and these were permitted to enter into Canaan, because they were " men of another spirit."^g This is verified in the experience of all who attain God's rest. They are entirely changed from what they were in their state of bondage. They are " new creatures." " Old things are passed away, and behold all things are become " new. They are renewed in the *spirit* of their minds." In their natural state, Satan wrought in them as " the children of " disobedience." But as born again, they are " men of another " spirit." " The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath " made them free from the law of sin and death."^h

The honour of conducting Israel into the promised land was reserved for Joshua. Bossuet's reflections on this subject are so beautiful, that I cannot do justice to them, without giving them in his own words. "Moses," he says "who does by so many wonders, only conduct the children of God into the neighbourhood of their land, is himself a proof to us, that *his law made nothing perfect*, and that without being able to give the accomplishment of the promises, it makes us *embrace them afar off*, or conducts us at most, as it were, to the entrance of our inheritance. It is a Joshua, it is a Jesus, for this was the true name of Joshua, who by that name, and by his office, represented the Saviour of the world; it is that man. so far inferior to Moses in every thing, and only superior to him by the name he bears; it is he, I say, who is to bring the people of God into the holy land."ⁱ It is worthy of observation, indeed, that the death of Moses, an event which at first view might seem an irreparable loss to the Israelites, is mentioned as greatly conducive to their interest. The Spirit of God speaks as if the life of this illustrious person had been a bar to their entrance into the land of promise. "After the death of Moses,—the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is *dead*; now *therefore* arise, go over this Jordan, thou and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even unto the children of Israel."^k "The law came by Moses, grace and truth," in the completion of the promise of the earthly Canaan, could come only by the typical Jesus. As it was in the type, so is it in the antitype. We are "dead to the law, that we may live unto God."^l It is only when this "husband is dead," that we are "loosed from his law, and can be married to another."^m Our Joshua also, that he may lead the true Israel into the land of promise, must be Moses' minister." He, who is so much greater than Moses, is prepared for his mediatory greatness, by becoming subject to him. For he was "made under the law, that he might redeem them who are under the law." It was necessary that he should "take upon him the form of a servant," ere he could appear as the Saviour of his Church.

In vain truly does any one seek rest under Moses. His law can afford no rest for the soul. Jesus alone can say to sinners; "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."ⁿ He it is who gives complete rest to his people. He receives their departing spirits,^o and gives them entrance into his heavenly rest. He will at length come to "receive us to himself," that where he is, "we may be also." He will present his whole Church "unto himself, a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle."

ⁱ Universal History, vol. i. part ii. sect. 3.

^l Gal. ii. 19.

ⁿ Mat. xi. 28.

^k Josh. i. 1, 2.

^m Rom. vii. 2—4.

^o Acts vii. 59.

It belonged to Joshua to divide by lot, to the different tribes, their several inheritances in the land of promise.^p This is the work of Jesus. The mother of Zebedee's sons asked in their behalf, that he would make the one to sit on his right hand, and the other on his left, in his kingdom. Our Lord did not deny that this work belonged to him; but declared, that he could perform it only according to the sovereign destination of God in his eternal purpose. "To sit on my right hand," he says, "and on my left, is not mine to give, but to them for whom it is prepared of my Father."^q It is he, who in this respect fulfils that eternal counsel, which the Father entered into with him, in the covenant of grace. "All power is given unto him in heaven," as well as "in earth." But his will extends no farther than that of the Father; because they are essentially one. He gives eternal life to those only whom the Father hath given him.^r The Church, when celebrating the ascension of her King, proclaims this as a part of his work in glory: "He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved."^s

No man might make a perpetual disposition of his inheritance in Canaan. It might be sold for debt. But this was only what is now called an *adjudication*. When the debt was paid off, it returned to the original proprietor. At any rate it did so in the year of jubilee. In this sense it is said, "The land shall not be sold for ever, for it is mine."^t It was not obstinacy, but a regard to the command of God, which made Naboth refuse to sell or exchange his vineyard. Hence, in suffering on this account, he suffered "for righteousness' sake;" and the LORD brought signal vengeance on his persecutors.^u This law, prohibiting the sale of inheritances, taught the Israelites, and teaches us, "that the gift of God may not be purchased with money *v* and that the heavenly heritage, which he hath prepared for his in Christ, cannot be alienated from them; but is surely confirmed in his blood, and reserved in heaven for them, to which they shall return at the great Jubilee of his second appearing, when the trumpet of God shall sound."^w

What reason have we to admire the grace and condescension of our God, in supplying us with such *ensamples*, which convey the most important instruction in a great variety of respects! He informs us that "our admonition" was one special end that he had in view, in giving so peculiar a frame to his Church under the law, and in treating her in so peculiar a manner. Even those illustrious messengers, whom he raised up under that dispensation, were given especially for our behoof. For "unto them it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto us," in the

^p Josh. xviii. 10.

^s Psal. xlvii. 4.

^v Acts viii. 20.

^q Mat. xx. 23.

^t Lev. xxv. 23.

^w Ainsw. on Lev. xxv. 23.

^r John xvii. 2.

^u 1 Kings xxi.

preaching of the gospel.^x This plan of instruction is also to be viewed as a principal branch of that " manifold wisdom of God," which is now made known to the Church, and by means of her " to the principalities and powers which are in heavenly places."

The greater our means of knowledge, the greater must be our guilt and condemnation if we abuse them. God not only warns us of the danger of neglecting or abusing our day of grace, from the typical example of the exclusion of all from Canaan, who provoked him in the wilderness ; but holds up that same people, in another light, as a still more affecting example of the danger of unbelief. The gospel was preached to them, not in types and ceremonies, and shadowy ordinances, but by the ministry of Christ and his apostles. They rejected it, and have been excluded from that blessed rest exhibited in the gospel. What is the lesson which the Spirit of God communicates to " sinners of the Gentiles," by this awful example ? " Because of unbelief " they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear : for if God spared not the natural branches, " take heed lest he also spare not thee."^y

SECTION V.*

On the Oblation of the First-Fruits, and the Feast of Pentecost.

IN Lev. xxiii. 9—11, we are informed, that " the Lord spake " unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say " unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto " you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a " sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest : and " he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for " you : on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it." There can be no doubt, that this institution was immediately meant to teach the Israelites gratitude to their supreme Benefactor, to remind them of their constant dependence on him, and to illustrate the necessity of consecrating their substance to the God of the whole earth. But a variety of circumstances, connected with this ordinance, indicate that it had a typical reference, and that it ultimately respected the resurrection of Christ.

This offering consisted of the *fruit of the earth*. The Messiah is often pointed out to the church under this character. He is not only " the Branch of the Lord, beautiful and glorious ;" but

^x 1 Pet. i. 12.

^y Rom. xi. 20, 21.

* When the Prospectus of this work was published, the Author had no intention of giving this, and the following section, as part of it. But as they are nearly connected with this branch of the subject, he trusts they will not be an unacceptable addition.

"the fruit of the earth, excellent and comely."^a He is "the rod that hath come forth out of the stem of Jesse, and the branch that hath grown out of his roots."^b To him that prophecy seems to refer; "I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it. I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent. In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it; and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing: in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell."^c Even the unbelieving Jews apply to the Messiah the following words; "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth, upon the top of the mountains."^d We know that Christ exhibits himself under this very emblem: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."^e*

The sheaf was of *barley*. For it was offered at the time of barley-harvest, which preceded the wheat-harvest in Canaan.^f Christ might well compare himself to wheat, because of his excellency, as this is superior to other grain. But still the barley was a proper emblem. For, to the carnal eye, his external appearance was mean and contemptible. He was the antitype of that *barley-cake* that tumbled into the host of Midian, and accomplished its destruction.^g For, like Gideon, his family was poor in Israel,^h and the means of his victory seemed totally inadequate to the end.

This offering was of *green ears*,ⁱ or, as it is rendered in the Greek, of *new corn*. This must have retained a great deal of its moisture. I know not, if this might have a typical meaning. Our Lord calls himself *the green tree*. As he was cut down by the sickle of divine wrath, in the very prime of his life; all that he suffered from the hands of men could not have caused his

^a Isa. iv. 2.

^b Chap. xi. 1.

^c Ezek. xvii. 22, 23.

^d Psal. lxxii. 16.

^e John xii. 24.

^f Ruth ii. 23.

^g Judg. vii. 13, 14.

^h Chap. vi. 15; viii. 2.

ⁱ Lev. ii. 14.

* The passage referred to, in Psal. lxxii. 16. is, with some others, expressly applied to the Messiah, in an ancient Jewish writing, entitled, *Midrash Koheleth*, on Eccles. i. 9. "As was the first redeemer Moses, so shall be the last. Of the first it is written, Exod. iv. 20, *And Moses took his wife, and his sons, and set them upon an ass*. So it is said of the last, Zech. ix. 9, *Lowly, and riding upon an ass*. The first redeemer made manna to descend from heaven; as it is written, Exod. xvi. 4, *I have caused bread to rain upon you from heaven*. So shall the last Redeemer be *an handful of corn*, or cake of bread, (*placenta panis*,) in the earth, Psal. lxxii. 16. As the first redeemer caused the well to spring up, (Num. xxi. 16,) so the last Redeemer, who is the King Messiah, shall cause the water to ascend; as it is said, Joel iii. 23. *And a fountain shall go forth out of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim*." Martini Pugio, p. 690.

death, had he not acted voluntarily in yielding up his spirit into the hands of his Father. This he shewed by the very manner in which he expired. For he "cried out with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost." When the earth gave forth this corn, in the resurrection of the Saviour, it was indeed *new*. It had never produced any such before. This ample womb had never born fruit absolutely free from the stain of sin, and not naturally subject to mortality. It had never carried such a *holy thing*.

This corn was to be *parched*.^k It was not dried in the usual way, by the heat of the sun; but dried by the fire. And surely, it was a fit emblem of that precious corn which was dried by the fire of divine anger. For he cries out, in that Psalm so peculiarly descriptive of his sufferings; "My strength is dried up like a poisard; and my tongue cleaveth unto my jaws."^l

It was *ground* corn. It is indeed called a *sheaf*.^m But the word also signifies an omer, the tenth part of an ephah or bushel. The expression rendered *beaten* out of full ears,ⁿ literally signifies *ground, bruised, or broken*. As God hath given us "the corn of heaven," he hath bruised it. For "he was bruised for our iniquities."

It was to be anointed with *oil*. "Thou shalt put oil upon it."^o We know that Jesus, after his resurrection, was "anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows."^p This joy was "set before him," and supported his holy human soul, while he "endured the cross."^q To him is that language referred; "Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance."^r He admits his people to a participation of it: for their "consolation aboundeth by Christ."^s So great was the joy of the disciples, when they saw their risen Lord, that they could scarcely believe the testimony of their own senses. Greatly as they had been attached to the presence of his human nature, they were well pleased to part with him in this respect, when once they were fully assured of the truth of his resurrection.^t

Incense was to be laid on this offering: "Thou shalt—lay frankincense thereon."^u As the death of Christ was "a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour" unto God, no less acceptable was his resurrection. It was no sacrifice indeed. But it was the great proof of the perfection of that sacrifice previously offered. When the true Noah again trode this earth, God "smelled a savour of rest from it."^x

This one sheaf, or portion of corn, was to be *accepted for the whole congregation*. "He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord,

^k Lev. ii. 14.

ⁿ Chap. ii. 14.

^g Heb. xii. 2.

^t Luke xxiv. 41, 52.

^l Psal. xxii. 15.

^o Ver. 15.

^r Acts ii. 28.

^u Lev. ii. 15.

^m Lev. xxiii. 10.

^p Psal. xlv. 7.

^s 2 Cor. i. 5.

^x Gen. viii. 21.

“to be accepted for you.”^y Christ not only died, but arose from the dead in a public character. He did so in the name of all the spiritual Israel. As really as “he was delivered for our offences, he was raised again for our justification.”^z The justification of believers is immediately ascribed to the resurrection of Christ, because this was the great evidence of the merit of his death. Without this proof of the perfection of his obedience and suffering, God could not have legally acquitted one who believeth in Jesus. It is because he who “was dead, is alive,” that he hath “the keys of death.”^a For he carried them with him in his resurrection. Thence hath he power to liberate all who confide in him.

A *lamb* was to be offered along with the sheaf. “And ye shall offer that day, when ye wave the sheaf, an he-lamb without blemish.”^b This may teach us, that the virtue of the resurrection of Christ springs from his death; and that vain is our confidence in him as risen, unless we trust in him as crucified. We cannot “know the power of his resurrection,” unless we also “know the fellowship of his sufferings.”^c

This corn was presented as the *first-fruits*, and its acceptance was the *prelude* of a future *harvest*. It is called “a meat-offering of the first-fruits.”^d Thus, our Lord, when speaking of himself under the emblem of “a corn of wheat,” says; “If it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”^e With respect to the resurrection, Christ is expressly called the first-fruits.^f “Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.—Christ the first-fruits, afterwards they that are Christ’s, at his coming.” Therefore, he is also called “the first-born from the dead.”^g

The *time* when this offering was made deserves our particular attention. It was restricted to one season, to one day. It was not to be offered till after the passover. But it could not be delayed beyond the second day after it. “On the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.”^h The passover was always observed on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan. The fifteenth, being the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, was to be “an holy convocation.” They were to “do no servile work therein.”ⁱ Therefore it was called a Sabbath. This offering was to be made on the morrow, that is, on the sixteenth day of the month. Now, “Jesus our passover was sacrificed for us,” on the sixth day of the week, and he rose again “on the morrow after the Sabbath.” The same time elapsed between his death and resurrection, as between the passover and the offering of the first-fruits. Nay he arose on that very day, on which

^y Lev. xxiii. 11.

^z Rom. iv. 25.

^a Rev. i. 18.

^b Lev. xxiii. 12.

^c Phil. iii. 10.

^d Lev. ii. 14.

^e John xii. 24.

^f 1 Cor. xv. 20, 23.

^g Col. i. 18.

^h Lev. xxiii. 11.

ⁱ Ver. 7.

the literal first-fruits must have been offered, according to the law. As this offering was to be made on the day after the Sabbath of the passover, we know that this was the day of the resurrection. For we are informed, that the day of the crucifixion was the preparation for the Sabbath, and that "that Sabbath was an "high day."^k Now, it is so called, because at this time the paschal and weekly Sabbaths met on one day. It is declared, that Jesus rose on "the first day of the week;"^l literally, "on the "first of the Sabbath." This expression is supposed to signify, that it was the first of those days that were to be numbered to Pentecost."^m

This was a *meat-offering*.ⁿ So is the risen Redeemer. He is "the corn of heaven," "the bread of life," "living bread." "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever."^o 'It hath this virtue, because he, who giveth himself for the food of his people, though he was once "dead, is alive, and liveth for ever—"more."

In a word, the Israelites were not permitted to eat any of the *new* corn of the land, till this was offered. "And ye shall eat "neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the self-same day that ye have brought an offering unto your God. It "shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations."^p They were not to eat of the new crop in any shape whatsoever. They had not liberty so much as to taste of it. Now, it is only by being "risen with Christ," that we can "seek those things that are "above."^q We cannot "eat that which is good," we can have no real appetite for it, till we be "planted together in the likeness "of his resurrection."^r "Therefore, we are buried with him by "baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the "dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk "in newness of life."^s A principal part of this *newness of life* consists in feeding on that *new* corn which God giveth us; and we are permitted to eat of it, only by virtue of Christ's resurrection. "We are risen with him through the faith of the operation of "God, who hath raised him from the dead."^t His resurrection, as connected with his death, is the cause of our spiritual resurrection to a life of faith. This very faith has a special respect to his resurrection, as proving that we have a sure ground of confidence. For "by him do we believe in God, that raised him up "from the dead,—that our faith and hope might be in God."^u

Not till after the resurrection did the disciples themselves eat of the new harvest. During the personal ministry of their Lord, they understood not his doctrine. They mostly fed on the old corn of the land. Their minds were much warped by the

^k John xix. 31.

ⁿ Lev. ii. 14.

^q Col. iii. 1.

^t Col. ii. 12.

^l John xx. 1.

^o John vi. 51.

^r Rom. vi. 5.

^u 1 Pet. i. 21.

^m Vid. Lampe in loc.

^p Lev. xxiii. 14.

^s Ver. 4.

same carnal notions with their unbelieving brethren. But “when he was risen from the dead,—they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.”^v “Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures.”^w Then he “fed them with the finest of the wheat.”^x “Corn made the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids.”^y

The feast of PENTECOST was to be observed on the fiftieth day from the offering of the sheaf of barley. Thence it derived its name, which signifies *the fiftieth*. The injunction concerning this feast immediately follows that with respect to the first-fruits; and they are so intimately connected, that the one, as to its very institution, seems to rest on the other. “Ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the *day* that ye brought the *sheaf* of the wave-offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete; even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath, shall ye number *fifty* days, and ye shall offer a new meat-offering unto the LORD.”^z It was also called the *Feast of Weeks*, because they counted in this manner. The same feast was also denominated that of *Harvest*. “Thou shalt keep—the feast of harvest, the first-fruits of thy labours.”^a At this time the Israelites were to offer the first-fruits of their wheat harvest. This feast was sometimes designed that of the *Giving of the Law*; because it was believed that the law was revealed on that very day which was afterwards called Pentecost. This calculation is made from the account given of the time of God’s coming down on Mount Sinai.^b

God required two offerings of the first-fruits. We have seen that the oblation of those of barley-harvest had its completion in the resurrection of Christ, who “arose as the first-fruits of them that slept.” But there was to be a second offering of the first-fruits of wheat-harvest on the day of Pentecost. This, we apprehend, prefigured the effusion of the Spirit, and its blessed effects.

The *time* exactly answered. It was on the day of Pentecost, the day on which the feast of harvest was observed, that the Spirit was poured down. “When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were with one accord in one place.”^c

This was a real *harvest* to the Church. The gifts and graces of the Spirit were plenteously communicated. There was also a rich harvest of precious souls. Three thousand were added to the Church by means of one sermon.^d

It was the *first-fruits* of harvest. All that was done on the day of Pentecost, was merely a prelude of what God was to do by his Spirit, in the conversion of multitudes of the Jewish na-

^v John ii. 22.

^y Zech. ix. 17.

^b Chap. xix. 1, 11.

^w Luke xxiv. 45.

^z Lev. xxiii. 15, 16.

^c Acts ii. 1.

^x Psal. lxxxvi. 16.

^a Exod. xxiii. 15, 16.

^d Ver. 41.

tion, and in the gathering of the body of the Jews at length to the Shiloh. "A remnant" was at this time brought in, "according to the election of grace."^e Now, this remnant was the first-fruits of that nation unto God. Hence the reasoning of the apostle, in the progress of the chapter: "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? For if the *first-fruit* be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches."^f This was also a prelude of the conversion of the heathen. For the apostle Peter informs his hearers, that the promise was not only "to them and to their children," but "to all that were afar off."^g

The offering of the first-fruits of barley-harvest was in *subserviency* to this. It was to be accepted of God for the Israelites, and to be a prelude of a second harvest. Illustrious as was the event of the resurrection of Jesus, it was in subordination to a more glorious display of his power. In the one instance, a dead body was raised to life. In the other, there was to be a resurrection of dead souls. Jesus rose from the dead for this very end, that he might "quicken those who were dead in trespasses and sins."—For "to this end, Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living."^h

There is a remarkable coincidence of *circumstances* between the literal and the spiritual Pentecost. The Israelites were attentively to *number* the weeks and days, from the offering of the first-fruits of barley-harvest, to this day. There is something peculiar in the mode of expression used by the Spirit, as to the arrival of this season: "When the day of Pentecost was fully come," &c. Our Lord had commanded the apostles to "tarry in Jerusalem, till they should be endued with power from on high."ⁱ He had said to them, immediately before his departure, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."^k These words were uttered ten days before Pentecost. As they, with the other Jews, would be engaged in numbering the days till the arrival of this feast, it is not improbable that they might expect then to receive "the promise of the Father;" especially as they knew that their Lord had given the most signal displays of his grace at such seasons. Thus, the intervening time would seem far longer than it had done in any former reckoning, till "the day of Pentecost was fully come."

The day of Pentecost was to be a day of *holy convocation* to the Church of Israel. "And ye shall proclaim on the self-same day; that it may be a day of holy convocation unto you."^l This was truly a day of holy convocation to the disciples. For "they were all with one accord in one place."^m They were assem-

^e Rom. ix. 5.

^h Rom. xiv. 9.

^l Lev. xxiii. 21.

^f Ver. 15, 16.

ⁱ Luke xxiv. 49.

^m Acts ii. 1.

^g Acts ii. 39.

^k Acts i. 5.

bled for the observation of the Lord's day. It was also a day of holy convocation to men "out of every nation under heaven."—When the report of the effusion of the Spirit was spread through Jerusalem, "the multitude came together;" and it consisted of "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews, and proselytes, Cretes, and Arabians."ⁿ These were the Jews of the dispersion, whom God in his gracious providence had at this time gathered together at Jerusalem. They were not only collected into an assembly, but three thousand of them were gathered together to Christ as their Head, and made the subjects of "an holy calling." Among these, we may reasonably suppose, there were some belonging to every one of the countries mentioned.—For it is improbable that the gift of any one *tongue* was in vain.

Jesus himself had compared the future work of his servants to that of *harvest*. "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already unto harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that both he that soweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour. Other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours."^o When our Lord spoke of the fields as white unto harvest, there can be no doubt that he referred to the harvest of souls, which was soon to be gathered in to himself. To the same purpose, he said on another occasion: "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest."^p

Not only is the success of the gospel in general exhibited in the language of prophecy, under the notion of a harvest; but this language is so express, as particularly to refer to the consecration of the first-fruits to the Lord, and to point out this very day of Pentecost as peculiarly meant. Thus, in the prophecy of Joel, in connexion with a command to "call a solemn assembly," to "gather the people," to "assemble the elders," and to turn unto God "with fasting, weeping, and mourning;" this question is proposed; "Who knoweth if he will turn and repent, and leave a blessing behind him, even a meat-offering, and a drink-offering unto the Lord your God?"^q This might have a literal respect to their deliverance from famine or scarcity, in consequence of their returning to the Lord. But undoubtedly it had a further and more glorious respect to the fulness of the gospel-harvest. For it follows; "And it shall come to pass afterwards,"

ⁿ Acts ii. 6—11.
^q Joel ii. 12—16.

^o John iv. 35—38.

^p Luke x. 2.

or "in the last days, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh."^r Now, concerning the wonderful effusion on the day of Pentecost, Peter says; "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel."^s

The offering made at this time is in two different places called a *new* meat-offering.^t And truly it was a new meat-offering unto the Lord, when in one day, the very day appointed for the literal offering which bore this name, three thousand souls offered themselves willingly to him. Then, indeed, was that gracious promise fulfilled in its spiritual meaning; "Ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new."^u That this promise, in its full extent, refers to the gospel-state, seems abundantly evident from what is immediately added; "And I will set my tabernacle amongst you, and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people."^x When the Spirit was poured out, the disciples did "eat old store." It had been locked up, in a great measure, in the sacred granaries of the Scripture. Formerly, they could not enter into these. "They understood not the Scriptures." The true meaning was in a great measure hid from them. The precious treasures contained in the word were concealed from their eyes, by the partition-wall of the ceremonial law; and by the metaphorical language of prophecy, adapted to a carnal people, and borrowing its emblems from earthly things. Their understandings were also locked, notwithstanding all external means. But then were their understandings *opened*, that they should understand the Scriptures. Then did the disciples "bring forth the old store because of the new." They eat the old and the new together. These scribes being "instructed into the kingdom of heaven, brought forth out of their treasure things new and old."^y Their speaking with new tongues,^z was but an emblem of the new discoveries they had obtained. The "new store" of gospel-light, communicated by the Spirit, enabled them to "bring forth the old," that had been so long treasured up for the Church in the prophetical writings.

The Israelites were to *rejoice* when they offered the first-fruits. They accordingly received this command; "Thou shalt set it (the basket containing the first-fruits,) before the LORD thy God, and worship before the LORD thy God. And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the LORD thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you."^a The joy which the Lord gave his Church, when the Spirit was shed forth, in his gifts and graces, was such as she never enjoyed before. Then was that prophecy fulfilled; "They joy before thee, according to the joy in harvest."^b It was a joy commu-

^r Joel ii. 28.

^u Lev. xxvi. 10.

Rev. xxi. 3.

^a Deut. xxvi. 2, 10, 11.

^s Acts ii. 16. ^t Lev. xxiii. 16; Num. xxviii. 26.

^x Lev. xxvi. 11, 12, comp. with 2 Cor. vi. 16;

^y Mat. xiii. 52.

^z Mark xvi. 17.

^b Isa. ix. 3.

nicated to the various classes of church-members. The spiritual *Levites*, the apostles of the Lord, were eminently partakers of it. This joy was extended even to the *stranger*. For here there were not only Jews, but *proselytes* :^c and in a short time it was to have a more eminent extension, when "the sons of the stranger" should join themselves to the Lord." Such was the spiritual joy of the new converts, that "they continued daily with one accord in the temple,—praising God."^d These men were indeed "full of new wine :"^e yet not in the sense in which the mockers spoke this language ; but as a fulfilment of the prophecy, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine."^f Then had the Church the most abundant reason to say ; "How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty !" For his precious gifts were distributed without distinction of rank or sex. He "poured out his Spirit upon all flesh ;—both on his servants, and on his handmaidens."^h "Corn made the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids."ⁱ

This, as we have seen, was also called the feast of the *Giving of the Law*. As it appears that this was the day on which the law was given from Mount Sinai, we know that on this day "the law went forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."^k When Jesus declared to his apostles that the gospel should be "preached among all nations," he commanded them to "begin at Jerusalem."^l And on this day did they enter on their public ministry, and proclaim "the law of faith." On this day, were they endowed with that power from on high, which was necessary to enable them to promulgate this law "among all nations." The giving of this new law was attested by the same symbol as the giving of the old. "The Lord descended on Mount Sinai in fire."^m Here "there appeared cloven tongues, as of fire."ⁿ But though the symbol was the same, the signification was very different. The fire of Mount Sinai expressed the consuming nature of that "fiery law" given to the Church ;^o but this, the purifying efficacy of the gospel of peace. The one declared that the iniquity of Israel remained ; the other, that it was "taken away."^p The people of God entreated that they might not see that great fire, and that God might not speak to them any more, lest they should die.^q But this fire was given as an emblem of God's so speaking to them, that they should live.*

c Acts ii. 10.

f Joel iii. 18.

k Isa. ii. 3.

n Acts ii. 3.

q Deut. xviii. 16.

d Ver. 46, 47.

h Acts ii. 18.

l Luke xxiv. 47.

o Deut. xxxiii. 2.

e Ver. 13.

i Zech. ix. 17.

m Exod. xix. 18.

p Isa. vi. 6, 7.

* Since writing these thoughts, I observe with pleasure, that in the view given of this feast, I have the countenance of the learned Spanheim. "The feast of Pentecost," he says, "prefigured the mission of the Holy Spirit, the first-fruits of the Spirit which fell on that same day on which the law was given, and by which the spirit of bondage was in-

SECTION. VI.

On the Feast of Tabernacles, under the New Testament.

It has appeared, from a variety of considerations, that we may justly view the oblation of the First-fruits, as prefiguring the resurrection of our Lord; and the Feast of Pentecost as a type of the effusion of the Spirit. It is still more clear, that the FEAST of TABERNACLES was typical of that glorious state of the Church, when "the fulness of the Gentiles shall be come in, and all Israel shall be saved." This is determined by the Spirit of prophecy: "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations, which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King the LORD of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem, to worship the King the LORD of Hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain: there shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations, that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles."^r

I need scarcely take time to shew, that this prophecy respects the last days of the New-Testament Church. This seems to be generally admitted. The Jews themselves understand it of that *millennium*, in which, according to their carnal apprehensions, the Messiah is to reign on earth, and to bring all nations within the pale, and under subjection to the ordinances, of the Jewish church.^s As the seventh verse of the thirteenth chapter evidently limits the prophecy to the New-Testament dispensation, a considerable part of the four preceding chapters seems unquestionably to respect the final conversion of the Jews. The ninth verse of this chapter contains a prediction fraught with comfort to the Church, but which has never yet been fulfilled: "And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one." The holiness ascribed to the Church in this period, is such as she hath never yet known: "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be Holiness unto the LORD of Hosts: and all they

^r Zech. xiv. 16—19.

^s Vide Comment. Hieronym. in loc.

"troduced; as it also prefigured the first-fruits of the new church,[†] and of the ministry of the apostles, and of that new bread, with which the Jews first and then the Gentiles were to be fed." Chronol. Sacr. Par. i. cap. 15.

[†] Acts ii.

“ that sacrifice, shall come and take of them, and see the therein :
 “ and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite, in the
 “ house of the LORD of Hosts.”^t

It needs scarcely to be observed, that the whole passage must be understood spiritually ; that Jerusalem denotes the New-Testament Church, that *Jerusalem which is above, and is free* from all ceremonial worship ;^u and therefore, that the observation of the Feast of Tabernacles respects spiritual worship alone. It is evident, indeed, from this feast being mentioned singly, that the passage cannot be justly explained in any other way. For, had it referred to ceremonial worship, the Passover and the Feast of Weeks, which were equally of divine institution, would not have been excluded.

A variety of prophecies both in the Old and New Testament, contain the same allusion. Thus, the following declaration forms a part of the prophecy of Isaiah concerning *the new heavens and the new earth*, or the glory of the Church in the last days : “ It shall come to pass, that from one new-moon to another, and from *one sabbath to another*, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.”^x This does not refer to every new-moon, or to every sabbath. For the males were bound to come to Jerusalem only thrice a-year ; nor was it possible for them to attend the temple-worship, as often as the words would seem to signify. But the expression is explained by that in Zech. xiv. 16., and respects the time of the solemn feasts, which were always celebrated at the new-moon.^y In reference to the last period of the New-Testament Church, it may denote the great strictness and regularity of Christians in their attendance on divine ordinances as the allusion to the new-moons is supposed to signify the new light communicated to the Church under the gospel, and the great increase of it in that happy period which the prophecy immediately respects.

The same allusion occurs in Hos. xii 9. “ And I that am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the solemn feast.” This prophecy seems to respect the return of the ten tribes to the God of their fathers ; especially as viewed in connexion with the fourteenth chapter. If this prediction had a primary respect to the union of some from the different tribes with that of Judah, after the Babylonish captivity, it had but a partial accomplishment in that event. *Ephraim*, as a people, hath never yet said, “ What have I to do any more with idols ?”^z

Several considerations illustrate the propriety of representing the future glory of the Church under the emblem of this Feast.

^t Zech. xiv. 20, 21.

^u Gal. iv. 26.

^x Isa. lxvi. 23.

^y Vide Hieronym. et Vitring. in loc.

^z Hos. xiv. 8.

I. It was a season of *great joy* to the Israelites.^a Jewish writers observe, that "although they were to rejoice in all their "feasts; yet while the temple and sanctuary stood, there was "greater joy in this feast than in any other."^b They assign this reason, that it was said concerning it; "Ye shall rejoice before "the LORD your God seven days." The language used, indeed, in the appointment of this feast, seems to express a peculiar degree of joy; "Thou shalt surely rejoice;" or, as some render it, "Thou shalt be only joyful."^c In the evening of each day, the nobles, the members of the Sanhedrim, and other great men among the Jews, assembled in one of the courts of the temple, and in presence of all the people who were met there, expressed their joy by singing and dancing; while the Levites, and all who could join with them, played on the various instruments of music, which were used in the temple-worship.^d And doubtless, the period prefigured by this feast, will be a joyful season to the Church of Christ; more joyful than any other in her militant state. Then the "nations shall rejoice with his people,"^e In reference to this blissful era is that call given: "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, "and be glad with her, all ye that love her; rejoice for joy with "her, all ye that mourn for her."^f—"Behold, saith the LORD, I "create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I "will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people, and the voice of "weeping shall no more be heard in her, nor the voice of crying."^g The felicity of this period is described in similar language in the New Testament: "God shall wipe away all tears "from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the "former things are passed away."^h

II. The *design* of the institution of this feast acquaints us with the reason of that peculiar joy by which the celebration of it was distinguished. It was appointed in commemoration of their situation in the wilderness, when they dwelt in booths, tabernacles, or temporary huts made of the boughs of trees; and of the miraculous protection afforded them, when they had no houses, the pillar of cloud overshadowing them like a tabernacle, and defending them from the injuries of the weather, and from other dangers to which they were exposed. They accordingly received this command; "Ye shall dwell in booths seven days;—that "your generations may know that I made the children of Israel "to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of "Egypt."ⁱ They were to contrast their comfortable state in the land of Canaan, where the Lord had given them victory over their enemies, and caused them to dwell in "great and goodly

^a Vide Brammii Doct. Foed. p. 4. c. 33. loc. 24. p. 974.

^b Maimon. in Hilchos, ap. Deyling. Obs. Sacr. p. 2. Obs. 31. p. 404.

^c Deut. xvi. 15. V. Ainsw. in loc.

^d Deyling. *Ibid.* Obs. 22. p. 296.

^e Deut xxxii. 43.

^f Isa. lxvi. 10.

^g Isa. lxxv. 18. 19.

^h Rev. vii. 17; xxi. 4.

ⁱ Lev. xxiii. 42, 43.

"cities,"^k with their former state, when they had no fixed habitations, when they sojourned in a land that had never been tilled or sown, and when the Canaanites were still in possession of the promised inheritance. This striking contrast ought to fill their hearts with joy, and inspire them with gratitude to their great Benefactor. In like manner, the recollection of the former situation of the Church, as compared with her state in the glory of the latter day, will be one special source of her joy in that period. An abode in the wilderness hath been allotted to her under the new, as well as under the old, dispensation. It is therefore said of her, in the figurative language of prophecy: "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three-score days."^l It is evident, that this is the same period with that during which the outer court is trodden under foot by the Gentiles, and the two witnesses prophesy in sackcloth.^m Now, although, through the mercy of our God, the Church is in an unspeakably more comfortable situation than during that period in which the tyranny of Antichrist was at its height, it seems difficult to conceive that she is yet properly brought out of the wilderness. She is, indeed, in sight of the land of promise. But the Canaanites still possess it. "The court which is without the temple is still trodden under foot." Christ's witnesses still prophesy in sackcloth. For even in those countries in which Protestantism is the established religion, the genuine doctrines of the gospel are generally despised, and their friends are "exceedingly filled with the contempt of the proud."

But when the Church shall be completely delivered, not only from spiritual Egypt, which hath been so long a house of bondage to her, but from her wilderness-state, with what joy shall she commemorate her liberation! Nay, with what joy and gratitude shall she remember her wonderful preservation, when she was so often in danger of being swallowed up! Then shall she acknowledge, that the Lord hath been indeed "a tabernacle for a shadow in the day-time from the heat, and for a place of refuge and for a covert from storm and from rain."ⁿ Then shall she triumph over those enemies who have so long spoiled her. Jews and Gentiles shall join in this triumph, according to that prophetic invitation; "Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful to his land, and to his people."^o Thus, it is foretold, in connexion with a passage formerly considered; "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."^p In the book of Revelation, while the joy of the Church is represented under the

^k Deut. vi. 10; xii. 10. 11.

ⁿ Isa. iv. 6.

^l Rev. xii. 6.

^o Deut. xxxii. 43.

^m Rev. xi 2, 3.

^p Isa. lxvi. 24.

emblem of that of a marriage-feast, this is preceded by the destruction of Antichrist and her other enemies.

III. The *rites* observed in the celebration of this feast were well adapted for expressing the character of that happy period referred to. Although it would seem, that there was no particular institution of some of these ; they might be ordered by God, in his providence, in correspondence to the general design of the emblem, in the same manner as the circumstances which took place in the family of Abraham, were meant to serve as “ an allegory.”^q At any rate, there are undoubtedly various allusions, in the New Testament, to some of the principal ceremonies observed in the celebration of this feast.

The Israelites were commanded to “ take, on the first day, “ the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm-trees, and boughs “ of thick trees, and willows of the brook.”^r With these were they to construct their booths. The Hebrew word rendered “ boughs,” signifying fruit ; the Jews chose branches which had fruit on them. That expression, “ boughs of goodly trees,” is, in the Chaldæe Paraphrase and Targum of Jerusalem, rendered the *fiome-citron* ; a tree which is said to bear fruit at all times, some falling off, some ripe, and some sprouting out continually. The Jewish writers understand the myrtle as meant by “ the boughs of thick trees.” They accordingly used branches of the pome-citron, of the palm-tree, of the myrtle, and of the willow, in constructing their booths. Maimonides says, that some of these trees were used because of their fragrance.^s The use made of them, on this occasion, might fitly represent the fruitfulness of the Church, and the sweet odour of her graces ; in that period which the allusion to this feast respects ; especially as, in the language of Scripture, the saints are said to “ flourish “ like the palm-tree ;”^t and the success of the gospel, in the conversion of sinners, is represented by the springing up of the “ myrtle,”^u and of “ willows by the water-courses.”^v

The Israelites having constructed such booths, were to leave their houses, and lodge in them. Vitringa, in applying this figure to the Church under the New Testament, beautifully extends his thoughts to the great diffusion of the gospel, especially towards the close of this dispensation. “ As in this feast,” he says, “ the Israelites having left their houses, erected tabernacles “ wherever they pleased, in the fields and public places,—so “ shall it be as to the state of *that* church, and especially in the “ last times. She shall leave her *Father’s house* ; she shall forsake the temple, a fixed residence truly, with all its sacred rites “ and apparatus ; she shall renounce external kindred and alli-

^q Gal. iv. 24.

^r Lev. xxiii. 40.

^s More Nevochim, Par. 3. c. 43.

^t Psal. xcii. 13.

^u Isa. xli. 19 ; lv. 13.

^v Isa. xlv. 4.

"ance ; and shall live dispersed through the field, (*for the field is the world,*) and shall worship God in spirit and in truth, in this new-born, and as it were renovated and flourishing age, in which *all things new* shall grow and flourish ; not confined to a certain place, but having acquired *the inheritance of the world.*"*w*

The same learned writer, explaining these words, Rev. vii. 15, "He that sitteth on the throne, *σχημασι επ' αυτους*, shall overshadow them, or cover them with his shadow," admits that they contain an allusion to Isa. iv. 5, 6, and to the cloud of glory which overshadowed the Israelites in the wilderness. But he at the same time observes, that there is an evident respect to the *tabernacles*, which the Israelites, according to the law, constructed of green boughs, in the feast which bore this name. "If," says he, "it was so pleasant to the Israelites, and filled them with such hilarity and delight to pass a few days with the greatest liberty, under the verdant cover of palms, myrtles and willows, having as it were laid aside their domestic cares and troubles ; how much more glorious, safe and delightful, to be inumbrated by the glory of the LORD itself in his temple, and to rejoice continually in the privileges and prerogatives of the heavenly sanctuary !" *x* He considers it as a confirmation of his idea, that it immediately follows : "The Lamb—shall lead them to living fountains of waters." For he views these words as containing an allusion to another rite used in the same solemnity, as shall be afterwards explained. It indeed deserves our attention, that the Israelites, in this feast, did not merely commemorate their dwelling in tabernacles, but God's *making* them to do so ; that is, his preserving them, while they had no other outward defence. And how did he thus "make them to dwell in tabernacles," but by being himself a tabernacle to them, "hiding them in his tent, in the secret of his tabernacle," *y* by the protection of the pillar of cloud. It is also worthy of observation, that the temple, built by Solomon, was dedicated during the time of the feast of tabernacles.*z* Now, as this temple prefigured the natural body of Christ, it was also a type of his mystical body the Church.*a* Therefore, the dedication of it at this time might prefigure the peculiar happiness of Christ's spiritual temple, in being "filled with the glory of the LORD ;" especially in those days in which the Church shall celebrate the feast of tabernacles.

The Jews did not merely use these branches in constructing their booths ; but carried in their hands bundles of them, in their processions during this feast : and they called the whole bundle *Lulab*, or the palm-branch.*b* This has been used by various nations as an emblem of victory. Vitringa conjectures, with great

w De Synagoga Vetere, Lib. 3. P. i. c. 5. p. 676. *x* In Apoc. p. 421.

y Psal. xxvii. 5.

z 1 Kings viii. 2 ; 2 Chron. vii. 8—10.

a Eph. ii. 21.

b Maimon. ap. Ainsw. in Lev. xxiii. 40.

probability, that it is in allusion to this custom, as it prevailed among the Jews, that the Holy Spirit represents the members of the Christian Church, as carrying palms in their hands,^c to denote her victory over Antichrist. "This church," says he, "consisting of the confessors of the truth, and of the elect who shall be gathered to it, shall about this time celebrate that feast of tabernacles, concerning which Zechariah hath prophesied.^d For it was the will of God that this feast should be a figure of those blessed and happy times, which the church should enjoy on earth, after finishing her struggles for the faith."^e

Another rite, performed with great solemnity, was that of *the drawing of water*. When the parts of the morning sacrifice were laid on the altar, one of the priests went with a golden vessel to the fountain of Shiloah, and drew water out of it. As he returned, the trumpets were sounded, and the priest himself, with the whole assembly, sung these words: "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."^f He carried this water to the ascent of the altar, where stood two basons. One of these contained wine. Into the other he put the water; and having mixed them, he poured them out as a libation. Some think that the Jews devised this rite, in commemoration of those waters which miraculously followed their fathers in the wilderness. Others suppose, that it contained a reference to the words of Isaiah, mentioned above.^g We learn from Jewish writers, that this ceremony was observed every morning of the feast.^h As they sung the *great Hallel*, consisting of the cxiii, cxiv, cxv, cxvi, cxvii, and cxviii Psalms at the time of this libation, after the evening sacrifice they began their rejoicing for *the pouring out of water*. So great was this rejoicing, that it is a common saying with the Jewish writers, that "he who never saw the joy of the pouring out of water, never saw joy in his life."

Although this rite was not expressly instituted by God, he might providentially overrule it as an emblem of what should take place under the gospel, particularly of the effusion of the Holy Spirit as accompanying the dispensation of ordinances. We find, accordingly, that in the same chapter of Zechariah's prophecy, in which the future state of the church is represented as the feast of tabernacles, there is a remarkable prediction of the extensive success of the gospel, under this very emblem of water: "And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea; in summer and in winter shall it be."ⁱ Also, in the description given of the same happy state of the Church, in the Revelation, it is said; "And he shewed me a pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal,

^c Rev. vii. 9.

^d Zech. xiv. 13.

^e In Apoc. vii. 9.

^f Isa. xii. 3. Vid. Lampe in John vii. 37.

^g Isa. xii. 3.

^h Bartenora Succa, ap. Deyling, Obs. p. 402, 403.

ⁱ Zech. xiv. 8.

“proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.—
“Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”^k The passage to which the Jews themselves refer, in describing this solemnity, evidently respects the last times, when God shall have “turned away his anger” from that people. Then “with joy” shall they celebrate the spiritual feast of tabernacles, by “drawing water out of the wells of salvation,”^l by receiving all new-covenant blessings, and particularly the gracious influences of the Spirit from Christ, that “fountain of living waters,” whom they have so long “forsaken.”

It can scarcely be doubted, that our Lord referred to the solemn rites of *drawing* and of *pouring out* water, which were accounted of such importance among the Jews, when on the last day of the feast of tabernacles, he “stood, and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”^m Did they reckon it necessary that this water should be drawn from a fountain? Here he exhibits himself as “the fountain of life.”ⁿ Would no water suit the occasion, but that of “Siloam, which is, by interpretation, Sent?”^o He proclaims himself to them as the true antitype of the fountain of Siloam, as he whom the Father had *sent*. Must this water be mingled with wine, and then be poured out before the Lord? In “pouring out his soul unto death,” he was in a short time to “come,” both “by water and blood.”^p

It deserves our particular observation, that the ancient Jews explained the *water* spoken of, Isa. xii. 3. of the Holy Spirit; and the *drawing* and *pouring out* of water, in the celebration of this feast, of the *communication* and *effusion* of the Spirit. For in the Jerusalem Talmud, when mention is made of the joy which the ancient Jews manifested in drawing water on this occasion, it is said; “Wherefore is it called the place of drawing? Because thence they draw the Holy Spirit. For it is written, With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.”^q As our Lord seems to refer to this custom, when he says, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink:” he also explains the *water*, to which he invites his hearers, of the Holy Spirit: “But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.”^r

During this feast, the Jews came once every day into the court, and went about the altar, with their palm-branches bending towards it, and cried, “Hosanna,” or, “Save now, O LORD; O LORD, send now prosperity!” On the seventh day, they went about the altar seven times, crying, “Hosanna!” Hence the Rabbins give to the feast the name of *Hosanna*; and they

^k Rev. xxii. 1, 17.

^l Isa. xii. 3.

^m John vii. 37, 38.

ⁿ Psal. xxxvi. 9.

^o John ix. 7.

^p 1 John v. 6.

^q Cod. Succa, ap. Deyling, ut sup. p. 405.

^r John vii. 39.

call the seventh day "the great Hosanna."^s For the same reason they are said to have given the name of *Hosanna* to their palm-branches.^t Thus we see why the whole multitude, on occasion of Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem, "took branches of " palm-trees and went forth to meet him," and cried out "Hosanna to the Son of David!"^u As their Hosannas, during the feast of tabernacles, had an immediate reference to the promised Messiah, they here acknowledged Christ in that character. The scribes taught, that the child, who knew how to wave the palm-branch, was bound to carry it, that he might be trained up in the doctrine of the commandments.^v Accordingly, we find that when Christ entered, even "the children cried in the temple, Hosanna to the Son of David."^w

The celebration of the New-Testament feast of tabernacles, is evidently described in allusion to this solemn rite of the *Hosanna*. For as we have seen that the members of the Church, in this period, are represented as having "palms in their hands;" they also "cry with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which "sitteth on the throne, and unto the lamb."^x The ascription of *salvation* plainly refers to the prayer for *salvation* implied in the word *Hosanna*. Vitringa has observed, that their ascribing this, not only to *God*, but to *the Lamb*, seems to allude to a form of praise used in celebrating this feast; as explained by an observation in the *Mischnah*, "I pray thee, O LORD, give salvation; O LORD, I pray thee send prosperity." Rabbi Jehuda hath said, "I and He, give thou salvation now."^y As in this formulary some secret is evidently concealed, Alting apprehends that it involves the mystery of the Holy Trinity, from which, under the name of three distinct persons, (*I, Thou*, in the expression *give thou*, and *He*), they supplicated assistance and grace, and to which they ascribed salvation.^z This agrees with the observation made by another learned writer. Having remarked, that it is enjoined in the Jewish rituals, that, on the seventh day of the feast, they should use this language; "For thy sake, O our Creator, Hosanna; for thy sake, O our Redeemer, Hosanna; for thy sake, O our Secker, Hosanna;" he adds, "as if they addressed themselves to the blessed Trinity, to save them, and send help to them."^a

It is the opinion of Vitringa, that there is still another allusion to the Jewish mode of celebrating this feast, in the account given of those who appeared "with palms in their hands." When they cried, "Salvation to our God."—"all the angels fell before "the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen."^b

^s Vid. Lampe in John vii. 37. Lewis's Heb. Antiq. vol. ii. p. 598.

^t Angelus Caninius, ap. Vitring. in Apoc. vii. 10. ^u Mat. xxi. 9; John xii. 13. ^v Maimon in Shophar, ap. Ainsw. in Lev. xxiii. 40.

^w Mat. xxi. 15. ^x Rev. vii. 10. ^y Ego et Ille, salutem præstare nunc. In Rev. vii. 10. ^z Ap. Vitring. ubi sup. ^a Lewis Heb. Antiq. vol. ii. p. 598. ^b Rev. vii. 11, 12.

For in the solemnization of that feast, while the words of the Psalms, which constituted *the great Hallel*, were recited by one person, at certain clauses the whole congregation answered, *Halleluia*, and sometimes repeated the clauses themselves. As the worship of the New-Testament Church is, in the book of Revelation, uniformly represented in allusion to the temple-worship, we need not wonder, as Vitringa observes, that the angels are introduced as joining in chorus with the palm-bearers in this great spiritual feast, and as thus, at the same time, manifesting their love to Christ and to the Church.

Our Lord describes the conversation of the Jews, in the latter days, in language borrowed from this feast. After declaring, that, on account of their rejection of him, "their house was left unto them desolate;" he adds, "For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."^c These words evidently contain the reason of the preceding declaration, that "their house was left unto them desolate." It had been their distinguishing mercy, although they knew it not, that he, as "the Messenger of the covenant, had come to his temple." Thus, the glory of the latter, far exceeded that of the former, house. But now he was about to leave them. With these words he closes his public ministry. He was no more to appear in the temple, or indeed any where else, as a public teacher. His instructions were afterwards delivered "privately" to his disciples.^d In pronouncing these words, he takes a solemn leave of that "house," which was now converted into "a den of thieves." For the language of inspiration, immediately connected with them, certainly denotes something peculiar: "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple."^e He thus informs them, that as a nation they should see him no more in his public character, till they should be made to acknowledge him as the true Messiah, and by faith "look upon him whom they had pierced;"^f when he should come, in the gracious influences of his Spirit, to "turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Then should they welcome him with a sincere *Hosanna*. Then should they celebrate the feast of the tabernacles in a new manner, and joyfully acknowledge, that "Jehovah himself was become their salvation."^g

In the evening, when they proceeded to testify their joy for the effusion of water, the temple was so completely illuminated, by means of lights placed fifty yards high, that, it is said, there was not a street in Jerusalem which was not lighted by them. Many also carried lighted torches in their hands. Deyling supposes, that there is an allusion to this custom in that beautiful invitation given by believing Gentiles to the Jews; "O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord."^h But as

^c Mat. xxiii. 38, 39.

^d Mat. xxiv. 3; Mark xiii. 3.

^e Mat. xxiv. 1. ^f Zech. xii. 10.

^g Isa. xii. 2.

^h Isa. ii. 5. Obs. Sac. p. 11. Obs. 22.

this custom was not of divine institution, it must be very doubtful if it was so ancient as the date of this prophecy.

There is one ordinance, expressly of divine appointment in the celebration of this feast, which we cannot pass over in silence. There was a gradual decrease of the number of bullocks to be offered each day ; although there was the same number of rams, lambs, and goats. Thus on the first day, thirteen bullocks were to be offered ; on the second, twelve ; and so on to the seventh, on which day there were to be seven. On the eighth, only one bullock was required.ⁱ As the bullocks offered on the seven days were exactly seventy, the Jews apprehended that these were to make atonement for the Gentile nations, of which they also reckon seventy, according to the account given of them in Gen. x. The single bullock, to be offered on the eighth day, they consider as meant to atone for the sins of Israel.^k Various conjectures have been made as to the reason of the diminution of the number of bullocks. Some view it as an emblem of the gradual decrease of religion, during the millennium, till the time of Gog and Magog making their appearance.^l But this idea carries in it one thing extremely improbable ;—that this decrease is to commence nearly at the beginning of that period. Others think, that it signified the wearing away of legal sacrifices, ¹⁰at the Church might be led to a spiritual and reasonable service under the New Testament.^m

iv. We may also attend to the *season* of this feast. It was observed at the end of the year, in the seventh month, called by the Jews *Tisri*, and *Ethanim*,ⁿ including part of our September and October. This is designed “the revolution of the year.”^o Correspondent to this, the Christian feast of tabernacles is to be celebrated “in the last days.” Then, indeed, the church shall know a glorious *revolution*. This is that “time of the end” spoken of in Daniel, till which “the words are closed up, and sealed.”^p

It has been observed, that the number *seven* is, in many respects, the most remarkable number mentioned in Scripture, and is a *sacred number* above all the rest ; that the Israelites were commanded, not only to observe every seventh day as a day of rest, but every seventh year as a sabbath and year of rest ; and that the seventh month in every year, was a festival and sacred month, above all other months in the year, as it included the feast of trumpets, the great day of atonement, the feast of tabernacles, and the feast of ingathering. In regard to this sacred number, the feast of tabernacles, observed for *seven* days, in the *seventh* month, has been supposed to point out the very time when the millennium shall take place,—in the *seventh* and *last* thousand years

ⁱ Num. xxix. 13—36. ^k Benidbar Rabba, sect. 21. ap. Lewis, p. 606.

^l Wits. in Orat. Domin. Ex. ix. sect. 28. ^m Ainsw. on Num. xxix. 17.

ⁿ 1 Kings viii. 2.

^o Exod. xxxiv. 22. Heb.

^p Dan. xii. 9.

of the world.^g It is an opinion, indeed, that hath prevailed both among Jews and Christians, that as, in the old creation, God wrought six days, and rested on the seventh ; and as with him a thousand years are as one day ; he will carry on his work in the new creation for six thousand years, in preparing his Church for her glorious sabbatism in this world, on the seventh.

v. This feast was celebrated at the same time with that of *ingathering*, which they were to observe when they had "gathered in their labours out of the field."^r Some apprehend, that the feast of ingathering was to be observed only on the eighth or last day of the feast of tabernacles.^s But this is undoubtedly a mistake. For the same days are appointed for each. "The fifteenth day of the seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days.—Also, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days."^t Thus, these two feasts are, by divine authority, evidently conjoined ; and the Israelites are required to observe the feast of ingathering, that they may express their gratitude to God for his goodness in giving them their harvest : "Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine. And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates. Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the LORD thy God, in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose, because the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy increase, and in all the works of thy hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice."^u The feast of *Pentecost*, or *weeks*, was also called *the feast of harvest*. But it was totally distinct from this, both in institution and design. The feast of harvest respected only *the first-fruits of their labours*. The feast of ingathering, as its name signifies, respected the completion of their labours, when they gathered in all their corn and oil, and finished their vintage.^v

How fitly does this represent that blissful period, when the Church shall at once celebrate the feast of tabernacles, and of ingathering ; when she shall not only commemorate the former goodness of the LORD her God, in preserving her *in the wilderness*, but celebrate his present goodness in giving her so rich a harvest of souls ; nay, in the exercise of faith, anticipate his future goodness, and praise him because he "shall bless her in all her increase, and in all the works of her hands !" How often is this period prophetically described, in language borrowed from "the joy of harvest !" Thus it is declared ; "They shall

^g See Hopkins on the Millennium, sect. iii.
^s Lewis. b. iv. c. xxi. p. 604.
^z Deut. xvi. 13 – 15.

^r Exod. xxiii. 16.
^t Lev. xxiii. 34, 39.
^v Exod. xxiii. 16.

"come and sing in the height of Zion," that is, in the *mountain* of the gospel Church, as of old they came and sung in the literal *hill of God*, "and shall flow together to the goodness of the " LORD, for wheat, and for wine. and for oil, and for the young " of the flock, and of the herd : and their soul shall be as a watered garden, and they shall not sorrow any more at all. Then " shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old " together ; for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will " comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow."^w " For how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty ! " Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the " maids."^x The converts to true Christianity, in this period, are themselves compared to an abundant harvest : " The floors " shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and " oil."^y All the success of the gospel, which the Church hath hitherto known, shall then appear to have been only as the *first-fruits* before the harvest. Then the "fulness of the Gentiles " shall be come in, and all Israel shall be saved."^z

vi. Some have remarked the connexion between the great day of *atonement* and the feast of tabernacles. " On the tenth day" of the seventh month, that is, five days before the commencement of the feast of tabernacles, " was their annual and most " solemn fast, on which they were to confess their sins, and afflict " their souls, and atonement was made for them : which was a " figure of the repentance and extraordinary humiliation to which " the inhabitants of the world shall be brought, by the preaching " of the gospel, attended with the dispensations of divine providence suited to promote this, previous to their being raised up " to the prosperity and joy of that day. And then the joyful feast "—came on, on the fifteenth day of the same month."^a

This solemn fast especially included two things, a *ceremonial* atonement, and a *moral* repentance. The high-priest was to make atonement by sacrifice ; the Israelites were also to " afflict their " souls."^b The ceremonial atonement had its completion in the one offering of Jesus Christ, by which he " hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified." In this respect the day of atonement can have no proper antitype in the period referred to. Indeed, if we consider the efficacy of this atonement, or the application of the blood of this glorious Sacrifice, there may be some relation. For all those who shall come up " to keep the " feast of tabernacles" in a right manner, shall previously by faith come to " the blood of sprinkling." The efficacy of this atonement, made by our great High-priest, hath never yet reached the " congregation of Israel" according to the flesh. But various prophecies point out their " receiving the atonement," before

^w Jer. xxxi. 12, 13.

^z Rom. xi. 25, 26.

^b Lev. xvi. 29—31.

^x Zech. ix. 17.

^y Joel ii. 24.

^a Hopkins on the Millennium, sect. iii.

they participate in this joyful feast. Particularly, as it is declared, that "the LORD will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon all her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day;" and that "there shall be a tabernacle in the day-time, for a shadow from the heat;" it is previously foretold, that "the LORD shall wash away the filth of the daughter of Zion," and "purge the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning."^c We also learn from the prophecy of Zechariah, that, before the celebration of this feast, in consequence of the effusion of "the Spirit of grace and of supplication, upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem,—they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced."^d By faith they shall behold him "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation."

Another part of the high-priest's work, on the great day of atonement, might also refer to these last times. He was to "make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar."^e This is called "reconciling the holy place."^f Now, in that part of the prophecy of Ezekiel, which is generally understood as containing a description of the glory of the Church in the latter days, there is an evident allusion to this ordinance. It is declared, that the "sanctuary" shall be "cleansed," and the "house" be "reconciled." Although the language of the old dispensation be used, as the passage ^h undoubtedly refers to the new, it must be understood in a spiritual sense. Thus is the Church to be prepared for keeping the gospel passover, and feast of tabernacles. As the court of the temple, and "the holy city," are "given unto the Gentiles," to be "trodden under foot forty and two months,"ⁱ during the tyranny of Antichrist; and as the subsequent measuring of the temple,^k clearly corresponds with the measuring of it as described by Ezekiel,^l there is every reason to think, that the "cleansing" of "the sanctuary" denotes that real and scriptural holiness, which shall characterize the Church of God, and all the ordinances of religion. Then she shall appear as "the holy city," into which "there shall in nowise enter any thing that defileth."^m Then "he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy;—when the LORD shall have washed away the filth of the daughter of Zion."ⁿ

On the great day of atonement, the Israelites were also called to present "the sacrifices of a broken and a contrite heart." In this respect shall both Jews and Gentiles be prepared for celebrating the feast under consideration. It is particularly foretold concerning the Jews, that, in consequence of "looking" by faith "upon him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for an only son, and be in bitterness for him as

^c Isa. iv. 4—6.

^f Ver. 20.

^k Rev. xxi. 15.

ⁿ Isa. iv. 3, 4.

^d Zech. xii. 10.

^h Ezek. xlv. 18—25.

^l Ezek. xl. 3, &c.

^e Lev. xvi. 33.

ⁱ Rev. xi. 2.

^m Rev. xxi. 2, 27.

“one is in bitterness for a first-born.” So great, and so general shall this mourning be, that the only instance in their whole history, that may be considered as an emblem of it, is the universal lamentation of Judah and Jerusalem on occasion of the death of the good king Josiah.^o “In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.”^p

VII. The *millennium* may be called the feast of tabernacles, to denote the *spirituality* of that period. The Israelites then left their houses and other conveniences, to live in booths seven days. The Christian Church may be represented as keeping this feast, to signify, that her members, during that period, shall live as if they were unconnected with the world. They shall still remember the uncertainty of their earthly state, and keep in eye the dissolution of the “earthy house of this tabernacle.” They shall, in a remarkable degree, “set their affections on things above.” This idea agrees well with the prophecy following that concerning this Christian feast, in which the great holiness of the Church is described, as manifesting itself, not merely in the duties of religion, but in the common affairs of life, as pervading the whole conduct of her members: “In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD’s house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be Holiness unto the LORD of Hosts:—and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of Hosts.”^q

VIII. On the eighth or last day of the feast, there was “a holy convocation,”^r or “solemn assembly.”^s They were to “do no servile work therein.” It was to be observed as “a Sabbath.”^t On this day they returned from their booths to their houses. This was generally called the eighth day of the feast of tabernacles; though some reckon it as entirely a distinct feast. The Jews, however, continued the most of the rites, as on the former days, and particularly that of *drawing water*; and they called it “the great day of the feast.”^u The Jews assign various reasons for giving it this name. That mentioned by Philo seems to be as likely as any other. “The eighth day,” he says, “excels the rest, and it is called the *ἐξοδίου*, or conclusion, not merely of this feast, but of all the feasts of the year. For it is the conclusion of the year, and a more stable and sacred boundary; as those who have received their harvest, are no more vexed with anxious fears of sterility.”^v “We go,” says Maimonides, “from the feast of tabernacles to another solemnity upon the eighth day. It tends to make our joys perfect; which could not be done in tabernacles, but in large and spacious houses and pa-

^o 2 Chron. xxxv. 22—25.

^p Zech. xii. 10, 11.

^q Zech. xiv. 20, 21. ^r Lev. xxiii. 36.

^s Num. xxix. 35.

^t Lev. xxiii. 39. ^u John vii. 37.

^v De Septen. et Festis.

“laces.”^w Therefore, this day surpassed all the former in joy and festivity.

Spanheim thinks, that this day of the feast prefigured the great *convocation* of the saints in heaven, or of the Church triumphant, after the lapse of “seven days” in the tabernacles of this life, in her militant state.^x And undoubtedly the keeping of *our* feast of tabernacles will be succeeded by the solemn assembly of all the saints. They shall leave their tabernacles, their temporary residences below, to enter into that “house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” They shall “rest from their labours;” and enjoy a perfect and everlasting *sabbatism*. There shall be a continuation of the same feast. But it shall be celebrated in a far more glorious manner. This shall be the conclusion of all their preceding feasts. Here shall the joy of them all be concentrated, and inconceivably surpassed. Now, for a short time, joy enters into the hearts of the saints. Then, they shall “enter into joy.” Now, joy must often give place to sorrow. Then, they shall be *crowned* with joy. “Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads.”

It must be gratifying to the reader, to know the judgment of the great Edwards on this important subject.* After quoting Zech. xiv. 16—19., he says; “’Tis evident by all the context, that the glorious day of the Church of God in the latter ages of the world, is the time spoken of.—There were three great feasts in Israel, at which all the males were appointed to go up to Jerusalem; the Feast of the Passover; and the Feast of the First-fruits, or the Feast of Pentecost; and the Feast of Ingathering, at the end of the year, or the Feast of Tabernacles. In the first of these, viz. the Feast of the Passover, was represented the purchase of redemption by Jesus Christ the paschal lamb, that was slain at the time of that feast. The other two, that followed it, were to represent the two great seasons of the application of the purchased redemption. In the former of them, viz. the Feast of the First-fruits, which was called the Feast of Pentecost, was represented that time of the outpouring of the spirit, that was in the first ages of the Christian Church, for the bringing in the first-fruits of Christ’s redemption, which began at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. The other, which was the Feast of Ingathering, at the end of the year, which the children of Israel were appointed to keep on occasion of their gathering in their corn and their wine, and all the fruit of their land, and was called the Feast of Tabernacles, represented the other more joyful and glorious season of the application of Christ’s redemption, which is to be in the latter days; the great day of ingathering of the

^w More Nevoch. P. 3. c. 43. ^x Chronolog. Sac. P. 1 cap. 15. sec. 9.

* The sentiments of this eminent writer could not be inserted in those parts of this essay to which they properly belong; as the greatest part of it was printed before I met with the passage.

elect, the proper and appointed time of gathering in God's fruits, when the Angel of the Covenant shall thrust in his sickle, and gather the harvest of the earth; and the clusters of the vine of the earth shall also be gathered. This was upon many accounts the greatest feast of the three.—The tabernacle of God was first set up among the children of Israel, at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles; but, in that glorious time of the Christian Church, God will above all other times set up his tabernacle amongst men: "And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."^y The world is supposed to have been created about the time of the year wherein the Feast of tabernacles was appointed; so, in that glorious time, God will create a new heaven and a new earth. The temple of Solomon was dedicated at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, when God descended in a pillar of cloud, and dwelt in the temple; so, at this happy time the temple of God shall be gloriously built up in the world, and God shall in a wonderful manner come down from heaven to dwell with his church. Christ is supposed to have been born at the Feast of Tabernacles; so, at the commencement of that glorious day, Christ shall be born; then, above all other times, shall "the woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, that is in travail, and pain to be delivered, bring forth her Son to rule all nations."^z The Feast of Tabernacles was the last feast that Israel had in the whole year, before the face of the earth was destroyed by the winter: presently after the rejoicings of that feast were past, a tempestuous season began. "Sailing was now dangerous, because the feast was now already past."^a So this great feast of the Christian Church will be the last feast she shall have on earth: soon after it is past, this lower world will be destroyed. At the Feast of Tabernacles, Israel left their houses to dwell in booths or green tents; which signifies the great weanedness of God's people from the world, as pilgrims and strangers on the earth, and their great joy therein. Israel were prepared for the Feast of Tabernacles, by the Feast of Trumpets, and the day of Atonement, both in the same month; so way shall be made for the joy of the Church of God, in its glorious state on earth, by the extraordinary preaching of the gospel, and deep repentance and humiliation for past sins, and the great and long-continued deadness and carnality of the visible Church. Christ, at the great Feast of Tabernacles, stood in Jerusalem and "cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink," &c.: signifying the extraordinary freedom and riches of divine grace towards sinners at that day, and the extraordinary measures of the Holy Spirit that shall be then given; agreeable to Rev. xxi. 6., and xxii. 17."

^y Rev. xxi. 3.^z Rev. xii. 1—5.^a Acts xxvii. 9.

The threatening denounced against those who shall not come up to keep this feast, that *upon them shall be no rain*, he understands as signifying that "they shall have no share in that shower of divine blessing that shall then descend on the earth, that spiritual rain spoken of, Isa. xliv. 3., but that God would give them over to hardness of heart and blindness of mind."*

Let us firmly believe the predictions and promises of God with respect to this glorious period ; and take comfort, in the present low state of the Church, from the assurance that he "shall arise, and have mercy upon Zion." Although it should be our lot to see still darker times, even times of general calamity : "signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars ; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring ;" let us not be dejected, but remember that Jesus hath said ; "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads ; for your redemption draweth nigh." Let us anticipate the accomplishment of the promises with respect to the future glory of the Church, and "rejoice before the LORD, because he cometh." Let it be our daily concern, earnestly to pray for his coming, and to look for this blessed event ; saying, in the exercise of holy desire, conjoined with a lively faith ; "Arise, O God, judge the earth : for thou shalt inherit all nations !"

* Edwards on the Revival of Religion in New England, p. 61—63.

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THE
USE OF SACRED HISTORY ;

ESPECIALLY AS ILLUSTRATING AND CONFIRMING

THE
GREAT DOCTRINES OF REVELATION:

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED,
TWO DISSERTATIONS;

THE FIRST, ON THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE HISTORY CONTAINED
IN THE PENTATEUCH, AND IN THE BOOK OF JOSHUA ;—THE
SECOND, PROVING THAT THE BOOKS ASCRIBED TO MOSES WERE
ACTUALLY WRITTEN BY HIM, AND THAT HE WROTE THEM BY
DIVINE INSPIRATION.

TWO VOLUMES IN ONE.

BY JOHN JAMIESON, D. D. F. A. S. S.
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, EDINBURGH.

VOL. II.

HARTFORD :
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THE HISTORY OF THE

ROYAL SOCIETY

OF LONDON
FROM THE FIRST INSTITUTION
OF THE SOCIETY IN THE YEAR 1660
UNTIL THE PRESENT TIME
BY JOHN VAUGHAN, ESQ.
OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE
IN TWO VOLUMES.
LONDON, Printed by J. Sturges, at the Sign of the Sun in St. Dunstons Church, near St. Pauls, in the Year 1754.

VOL. I.
CONTAINING THE HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY
FROM THE FIRST INSTITUTION
UNTIL THE YEAR 1680.
LONDON, Printed by J. Sturges, at the Sign of the Sun in St. Dunstons Church, near St. Pauls, in the Year 1754.

THE
USE OF SACRED HISTORY.

PART III.

ON THE
USE OF SACRED HISTORY,

AS ILLUSTRATING AND CONFIRMING THE GREAT DOCTRINES
OF REVELATION.

HAVING taken a cursory view of the History of God's ancient people, as containing many useful lessons ; we may now turn our attention to Scripture-History in general, as *confirming* or *illustrating* the *doctrines* of revelation. And so abundant is the evidence, which God is pleased to give us of the truth of these, that scarcely one of them wants this attestation.—It is only a few of the more important doctrines that we can propose to illustrate in this manner.

SECTION I:

On the Being and Unity of God.—His Being must be matter of Faith.—His Unity demonstrated, from Creation ;—from his wonderful Works, for the deliverance of his People ;—from the Judgments executed on the gods of the Heathen ;—from the Accomplishment of Prophecy ;—from the Answer of Prayer ;—from his Faithfulness to his Church ;—from the whole work of Redemption ;—from his Operation on the Heart.

“THE Sacred History,” as one justly observes, “is the history of God himself.” It is designed as a permanent testimony to his *being*. This is made known by the light of nature. But it is the will of God, that we should be persuaded of this doctrine, fundamental to all religion, not merely by reason, but by faith ;

and that our faith, with respect to this doctrine, should have the same foundation that it has with respect to any other contained in his word. Therefore, it is also given as matter of revelation. Nor, in the volume of inspiration, is it merely taught as a doctrine. It is demonstrated as a fact. We learn it not from God's word only, but also from his works. How often, in this respect, does he appeal to the works of creation? "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork."^a "Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee; and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these, that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind."^b In the account given of the creation, we have an exhibition of the Creator himself; "God created." In the very first words of the sacred volume, the existence of God is contrasted with that of all other beings. He "created in the beginning,"^c that is, "the beginning of the creature" or creation.^d This declares that he existed before all things, and that he gave being, not only to all the creatures, but to time itself.

A similar appeal is frequently made to the works of providence. "The LORD is known by the judgment which he executeth."^e It is thus that he replies to those fools who say in their hearts, "No God;" who, if they do not disbelieve the doctrine of his existence, wish that it were not true, and act as if assured that it were false, especially in persecuting his Church. God "scattered the bones of him that encampeth against" her. He enables her to "put them to shame, because God hath despised them."^f When he executes upon them the judgments written in his book, men are made to say; "Verily there is a reward for the righteous, verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth."^g They find it necessary to acknowledge, not only that "he is," but that he is the "rewarder of all them that diligently seek him."^h Of this, the history of the church is one continued proof; as appears from the beautiful compend given of it in the chapter of which these words are a part. All that they did or suffered was "by faith;" and their success clearly shows, that their faith was not placed on a nonentity.

Next to the doctrine of the existence of God, none claims a more distinguished place than that of his *unity*. To deny the unity of the Supreme being, is in effect to deny his existence: and this may be one reason why the heathen are called "atheists" in the world.ⁱ Hence there is no doctrine, that God hath been at more pains to inculcate and confirm. He separated one nation from all the rest of the world, as a peculiar people, for the

^a Psal. xix. 1.

^d Mark xiii. 19.

^g Psal. lviii. 11.

^b Job xii. 7—10.

^e Psal. ix. 16.

^h Heb. xi. 6.

^c Gen. i. 1.

^f Psal. liii. 1, 5.

ⁱ Eph. ii. 12.

preservation of this important truth. He employed them in exhibiting it to others, and by means of them he confirmed it in the sight of the heathen. "Ye are my witnesses, saith JEHOVAH, "and my servant whom I have chosen, that ye may know and "believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was "no God formed, neither shall there be after me."^k

The Sacred History uniformly attests that there is but one God, and that this is JEHOVAH the God of Israel. The proof that JEHOVAH is God, and that this God is one, is indeed the same. In many passages of Scripture, these two are inseparably conjoined. But even where the unity of God is not expressly declared, the revelation of himself as JEHOVAH implies the doctrine of his absolute unity. This name itself excludes every idea of an equal. He will not give the glory of it to another: for it denotes his independence and self-existence, and therefore the unity of his essence. Hence, all those operations by which he manifests that he is JEHOVAH, equally declare him to be the One God.

The law, given to God's peculiar people, is a key to their history, and their history is a practical commentary on their law, and a continued proof of its divine origin. As several of the precepts of the moral law, and many of the positive injunctions, teach or guard the doctrine of the unity; when God would commit this law to the church, he infolds it in an historical narrative, which throws the greatest light on this fundamental doctrine.

1. He would not have the sons of Jacob to consider him merely as their Father, who had "made them, and established" them, as a people: for, like other nations, they might have believed this, however inconsistently, without acknowledging that he was the one true God. He therefore reveals himself as "JEHOVAH, "the creator of the ends of the earth;"^l and addresses his peculiar people in this language: "Thus saith JEHOVAH thy redeemer, "and he that formed thee from the womb, I am JEHOVAH that "maketh all things, and stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that "spreadeth abroad the earth by myself."^m He accordingly prefaces the volume of revelation with a particular account of the work of creation, which none but himself could give: and from this account, as well as from a great many other passages, it is most evident that this was wholly the work of One Being. The idolatry of the Gentiles consisted in worshipping the creatures instead of God. To prevent the imitation of this idolatry, and to illustrate its absurdity, he enumerates the various parts of creation, and shews that they were all the works of his hands. The most of the heathen nations worshipped the host of heaven, either expressly, or under the disguise of different proper names or peculiar symbols. But, in the history of creation, the church

^k Isa. xliii. 10.

^l Isa. xl. 28.

^m Isa. xliv. 24.

is taught that the sun, moon, and stars were all the workmanship of her God. For he who "created the heaven and the earth,"ⁿ "finished all the host of them."^o On this subject, Buosset has an observation, which merits our attention. "It pleased the "great Artificer," he says, "to create the light, even before he "reduced it to the form he gave it in the sun and stars : because "he meant to teach us, that those great and glorious luminaries, "of which some have thought fit to make deities, had, in themselves, neither that precious and shining matter, whereof they "were composed, nor the admirable form to which we see them "reduced."^p

It was held in a great part of the East, that there were two first principles ; the one, the cause of good ; the other, of evil ; the one presiding over light, and the other, over darkness. But the sacred historian declares that light and darkness are equally under the power of the God of Israel.^q The language of God, in his prophetic address to Cyrus, contains a beautiful illustration of this history. Its force and beauty especially appear, when we reflect that Cyrus was the leader of that very people who zealously adhered to the doctrine of two first principles, and with whom it seems to have originated. "I am JEHOVAH, and there "is none else, there is no God besides me : I girded thee, "though thou hast not known me : that they may know from the "rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none besides "me, I am JEHOVAH, and there is none else. I form the *light* "and create *darkness* : I make *peace* and create *evil* : I JEHOVAH "do all these things."^r

The heathen nations "changed the glory of the incorruptible "God, into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds "and four-footed beasts, and creeping things."^s The worship of the Egyptians was uncommonly vile. They worshipped the ox, the lion, the dog, the cat, the goat, the ape, the crocodile, the ichneumon, &c. The Israelites, who had sojourned so long among this idolatrous race, were deeply tainted with their pollutions. To pour contempt on this debasing worship, God carries his people back to the beginning of all things ; and shews them the fowl generated from the waters, and the quadruped and reptile rising from the earth, at his command. If the body of man himself was formed from the dust, it must be a very unfit image of its Former : as it afterwards appears, from the denunciation of the sentence of death, that nothing could be more absurd than to deify and adore a dead man. Well, therefore, may we say with Hezekiah ; "O Jehovah of hosts,—thou art the God, even thou "alone of all the kingdoms of the earth ; thou hast made heaven "and earth."^u

ⁿ Gen. i. 1.

^q Gen. i. 3—5.

^r Gen. ii. 7.

^o Gen. ii. 2.

^r Isa. xlv. 5—7.

^u Isa. xxxvii. 16.

^p Universal Hist. Vol. i. Part 2.

^s Rom. i. 23.

11. He records the *wonderful works* which he performed, and the *temporal deliverances* which he gave to his Church, as proofs of his being the only true God. She, on this ground, acknowledges his unity : "Thou art great, and dost wondrous things : thou art God alone."^u He appeals to the redemption which he should give his people from Egypt, in proof of his claim to the character of JEHOVAH, and of his peculiar relation to them ; "I will redeem you with a stretched-out arm, and with great judgment. And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God : and ye shall know that I am JEHOVAH your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians."^v It was his will that his unity should appear from these works. Therefore he thus addresses Israel : "Hath God assayed to take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that JEHOVAH your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes ? Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that JEHOVAH he is God ; there is *none else besides him*." By the record of these illustrious facts, he would have his people perpetually reminded of this fundamental doctrine, and confirmed in the belief of it. For he adds : "Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that JEHOVAH he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath : *there is none else*."^w

1. With this view were those works recorded, which immediately displayed the *mercy* of God towards his people. For they were recorded for the use of the church in all ages, with the very same design with which they were at first performed. Were the Israelites miraculously preserved in the desert ? It was to prove, that their God alone was worthy of faith and adoration : "I have led you forty years in the wilderness : your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot. Ye have not eaten bread, neither have you drunk wine, or strong drink : that ye might know that I am JEHOVAH your God."^x Did the waters of Jordan divide before them, as soon as the feet of the priests rested in them ? It was that they might know, that "the living God was among them ;" and that the ark which passed over before them, was "the ark of the covenant of the LORD of all the earth."^y

2. His works of *judgment* have the same end. When he confounds his enemies, and troubles them for ever ; when he puts them to shame, and makes them to perish ; it is that "men may know, that he whose name alone is JEHOVAH, is the most high over all the earth."^z It is his pleasure, that even his incorrigible adversaries may have such ample evidence of this, that they

^u Psal. lxxxvi. 10.

^x Deut. xxix. 5, 6.

^v Exod. vi. 6, 7.

^y Josh. iii. 10, 11.

^w Deut. iv. 34, 35, 39.

^z Psal. lxxxiii. 18.

shall either acknowledge it, or be left without excuse. He therefore says to Pharaoh; "I will send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people: that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth."^a Is Nebuchadnezzar driven from his dignity? "Hath he a beast's heart given unto him? It is "to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men."^b

3. From the wonderful works recorded in scripture, it is evident, that the *power* of JEHOVAH is alike in *all* the *regions* of the earth. The heathen had strange ideas of divine power. They not only affixed limits to it; but supposed that the power of one god was confined to one territory, and that of another to another. A people who, according to their vain imaginations, were perfectly safe under the protection of their tutelar deity, could derive no benefit from one who was a stranger to their country. If worshipped by a hostile nation, they frequently viewed him as their enemy. They indeed considered their deities in the same light with their earthly princes, whose dominions had certain boundaries, and who protected their subjects at the expense of their neighbours. They seem to have imagined, that the power of particular deities bore an exact proportion to the comparative strength or weakness of the people that worshipped them; or to the grandeur or apparent meanness of their worship. When God sent lions among the heathen who had been placed in the land of Israel by the king of Assyria, they considered the visitation as a token of his displeasure and therefore of his power; but had no idea that this extended beyond the limits of Palestine. They supposed that he had sent these lions to "slay them, because they knew not the manner of the God of the land."^c

Why was the army of Sennacherib destroyed; and why was this signal destruction recorded? That it might be known, that the God of Israel was the only true God. That haughty conqueror, when he came against Judah, imagined that he had to do with a deity like those of the conquered countries. "Who was there," does he say, "among all the gods of the nations that my fathers utterly destroyed, that could deliver his people out of mine hand, that your God should be able to deliver you? As the gods of the nations of other lands, have not delivered their people out of mine hand, so shall not the God of Hezekiah deliver his people out of mine hand."^d Jerusalem, he concluded, must become an easy prey, because she had not an host of images to defend her; and the ark, the only thing to which he could give the name, seemed unworthy of being compared with those he had already conquered. "As my hands have found the kingdoms of the idols, and whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria: shall I not, as I have done

^a Exod. ix. 14. See also Ezek. xxv. 17.
^c 2 Kings xvii. 26.

^b Dan. iv. 17.
^d 2 Chron. xxxii. 14, 17.

“to Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols?”^e He argues, in proof of the imbecility of the God of Israel, from his tame submission to the insults that, as he supposed, Hezekiah had offered to him, in overthrowing his images, and impoverishing his worship : evidently insinuating, that if he could not avenge himself on so poor a prince as Hezekiah, one who had vanquished so many nations could have nothing to fear from him. Thus he impiously addresses the servants of the king : “If ye say unto me, We trust in JEHOVAH our God : is not that he, whose high places, and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said,—Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?”^f

Hezekiah, in his solemn address to God, represents this as a controversy in which the honour of deity is peculiarly concerned. He pleads for deliverance, and he obtains it, as a proof of the supreme dominion of JEHOVAH, of his absolute unity as God. He said, “O JEHOVAH God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth, thou hast made heaven and earth.—Now therefore,—save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD God, even thou only.” And what answer did he receive ? “Thus saith JEHOVAH God of Israel, that which thou hast prayed to me, against Sennacherib king of Assyria, I have heard. This is the word that JEHOVAH hath spoken concerning him,—Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.”^g This arrogant ravager is described as a wild beast, muzzled and managed at the will of his keeper : and, as if God would give him the most humiliating proof of his folly, he is saved from the stroke of the destroying angel, and suffered to return into his own land, that even *there* he might be a monument of the impotency of his idol, and of the power of JEHOVAH, the God of Israel, whom he had blasphemed. For he was slain by his sons, while “worshipping in the house of Nisroch *his god*.”^h

4. The same wonderful works afford a demonstration of the unity of God, as they display his absolute power over *all nature*. The heathen not only divided the nations, but made a partition of nature itself among their false gods. One presided over the thunder, another over the wind. The power of one was greatest on earth, the dominion of another was confined to the sea. One was lord of heaven, another reigned in hell. They had their gods of the hills, and their gods of the valleys ; their gods of the woods, and their gods of the waters. But JEHOVAH hath manifested his dominion over all the creatures, and made every

^e Isa. x. 10, 11.

^g 2 Kings xix. 15, 19, 20, 21, 28.

^f 2 Kings xviii. 22.

^h 2 Kings xix. 37.

part of nature obedient to his word. As he had displayed his sovereignty over the thunder, in rendering it the instrument of destruction in Egypt, he did so in like manner in causing it to cease. Thus Moses said to Pharaoh ; “ I will spread out my hands to JEHOVAH, and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail, that thou mayest know how that the earth is JEHOVAH’S.”ⁱ He destroyed the frogs which he had sent, and severed the land of Goshen, where his people dwelt, from the rest of Egypt, so that there were no swarms of flies there ; that he might shew that the meanest and minutest creatures were his hosts, and that the Egyptians might know that there was “ none like unto JEHOVAH,” that he was “ the LORD in the midst of the earth.”^k The Egyptians learned to their cost that the wind and sea obeyed him. After they ventured into the channel of the Red Sea, they cried out in despair, “ Let us flee from the face of Israel ; for JEHOVAH fighteth for them against the Egyptians.”^l The Syrians, when defeated by the Israelites, gave this as the reason ; “ Their gods are gods of the hills, therefore they were stronger than we ; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they.” But even under the wicked Ahab, God crowned Israel with victory, to vindicate his claim to universal dominion. “ There came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith JEHOVAH, Because the Syrians have said, JEHOVAH is God of the hills, but he is not God of the vallies ; therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am JEHOVAH.”^m

In the antediluvian age, the posterity of Cain had openly apostatized from the worship of God, and even the professors of the true religion almost universally lived as if there had been no God. He was therefore pleased, in the most awful manner, to assert his exclusive claim to the rights of deity, and to display his universal dominion. This he did by the deluge. No one could destroy the earth, but its Creator and Lord. “ JEHOVAH said, I will destroy man whom I have created, from the face of the earth, both man and beast.—Behold I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth.—Every living substance that I have made will I destroy.”ⁿ This tremendous dispensation was especially designed as a lesson to succeeding generations. Noah and Shem, in whose line the promise ran, lived for centuries after the flood, as witnesses of the truth of this judgment, and thus of the divine unity and dominion. They could appeal to this awful proof, in contending against the corruptions of the new world, and particularly against the first appearances of idolatry. In succeeding ages, a similar appeal was made, by the professors of the true religion, to the deluge as a fact that could admit of no dispute, and as a decisive evidence of the power and providence of the

ⁱ Exod. ix. 29.

^k Exod. viii. 10, 22.

^l Chap. xiv. 25.

^m 1 Kings xx. 23, 28.

ⁿ Gen. vi. 7, 17 ; vii. 4.

God whom they adored. Did the wicked say, "How doth God know? can he judge through the dark cloud?" His servants had this reply in readiness; "Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden? which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflowed with a flood; which said unto God, Depart from us; and what can the Almighty do for them?"^o

5. By means of these wonderful works, even the *heathen* have been *convinced*, that JEHOVAH was the *God* of heaven and earth. Naaman the Syrian, when delivered from his leprosy, in consequence of using the means prescribed by the prophet of JEHOVAH, made this confession; "Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel."^p Nebuchadnezzar was a bitter enemy to the God of Israel, and a violent persecutor of his people. He said in his heart, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north."^q He, accordingly, had destroyed the temple of God, carried off the sacred vessels, and "put them in his temple at Babylon."^r Israel had never known an oppressor like him. Others had "devoured him," by feeding on his flesh. But this unrelenting adversary accomplished a more thorough destruction: "Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones."^s We now where read of a prouder or more insolent enemy of God. He indeed set himself up as a god to his subjects; for he would have them all to believe as he did, and to worship that idol to which he decreed divine homage. But even this haughty adversary God was "able to abase." When he saw the miraculous deliverance of the three faithful witnesses, who would not on any account bow the knee to the image which he had erected, he was convinced of the superiority of their God to all his idols. "There is no other God," he said, "who can deliver after this sort."^t But as his conviction was partial, it seems to have been only of short duration. JEHOVAH would therefore humble him yet more. He must himself be the monument of almighty power. He was as a beast before God, and he had acted the part of a wild beast to his heritage. He is therefore sent to herd with the beasts, and "a beast's heart is given unto him," till he should "know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men."^u After this awful visitation, we find this once haughty monarch making the following declaration: "Mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation. And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the in-

^o Job xxii. 13, 15—17.

^r 2 Chron. xxxvii. 7.

^u Chap. iv. 25.

^p 2 Kings v. 15.

^s Jer. l. 17.

^q Isa. xiv. 13.

^t Dan. iii. 29.

“habitants of the earth ; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What dost thou ?”^v

Cyrus was a stranger to the God of Israel. But this God thus addresses him in prophecy, delivered several centuries before he was born ; “ I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut.—And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I JEHOVAH, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.”^w And Cyrus was made to *know* this, and seems to have had some sort of persuasion of the truth of divine revelation. Therefore he made this proclamation throughout his dominions : “ Thus saith Cyrus the king of Persia, JEHOVAH the God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people ? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem,—and build the house of JEHOVAH the God of Israel, (he is the God.)”^x

In like manner, when Darius knew the miraculous deliverance of Daniel from the power of the lions, he thus proclaimed the power of JEHOVAH to all his subjects : “ I make a decree, that in every dominion of my kingdom, men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel ; for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth ; and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth.”^y

III. The *judgment* that JEHOVAH hath executed on the *gods* of the heathen, affords a striking demonstration of his being the only true God. They could give no protection to their worshippers, for they could not deliver themselves. One bitter ingredient, in the tenth and last plague that God brought upon the Egyptians, was the destruction of their idol-deities. This proof would he give his people, that he alone had a claim to the character of God. “ I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment ; I am JEHOVAH.”^z Doubtless, it was also meant as a reproof to the Israelites, for their folly and wickedness in adopting the impure worship of Egypt : and as a warning against such idolatry for the future. For he thus speaks concerning Israel many ages afterwards : “ In the day that I lifted up mine hand to bring them forth of the land of Egypt,—then said I unto them. Cast away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt : I am JEHO-

^v Dan. iv. 34, 35.

^y Dan. vi. 25—27.

^w Isa. xlv. 1, 3.

^z Exod. xii. 12.

^x Ezra i. 2, 3.

"*VAH* your God."^a Some think that the threatening refers to the destruction of those beasts that the Egyptians worshipped. Indeed, as they worshipped four-footed beasts, and fowls, and creeping things, it is natural enough to suppose, that a number of these gods would be involved in the destruction of the first-born ; for it extended to both man and beast. But it is scarcely credible, that all the brute creatures which they worshipped were first-born ; and we know that they had deities of another kind. Now, this judgment reached *all* their gods. It is therefore necessary to suppose, that it operated in various ways. It is probable that the divine vengeance extended to all the brutes which they worshipped ; and that at the same time their idols were destroyed. The Hebrew writers say, that God "threw down all the images of their abominations, so that they were broken in pieces."^b According to the Chaldee Paraphrast, the idols of metal were melted, those of stone or earth were broken, and those of wood were reduced to ashes. In the writings of the heathen, there are various allusions to this event ; although, according to their usual way, mixed with fables.^c

Similar was the judgment executed on Dagon the idol of the Philistines, when they presumed to bring in the ark, as a captive, into the temple of their god. Their deity fell down prostrate before the ark of God, and was broken in pieces ; so that his foolish worshippers were forced to make this acknowledgment to the God of Israel ; "His hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god."^d

JEHOVAH pours contempt on the idols of Babylon, when predicting their fate : "Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle : your carriages were heavy laden, they are a burden to the weary beast."^e The prophecy refers to the destruction of these idols by the Persians, who, because of the preciousness of the metals of which they were made, brake them in pieces, and carried them away into their own country, to convert them to other uses. Thus he also speaks by Jeremiah ; "Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces ; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces."^f And he appeals to the general destruction he should bring on the idols of the heathen, as a proof of their vanity, and of his own sole dominion : "*JEHOVAH* is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king : at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation. Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens, and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.— They are vanity, and the work of errors : in the time of their

^a Ezek. xx. 6, 7. ^b Pirke Eliezer. chap. 48. ^c Vid. Bocharti Hierozoic. vol. i. p. 343, 616, 644. Witsii Egyptiac. p. 219. Pol. Synops. in loc.
^d 1 Sam. v. 3, 4, 7. ^e Isa. xlvi. 1. ^f Jer. l. 2.

“visitation they shall perish. The portion of Jacob is not like them : for he is the former of all things ;—JEHOVAH of hosts “is his name.”^g

iv. The accomplishment of *prophecy* is another proof of the divine unity. This is not merely a proof from facts, but one of the most striking kind that can possibly be conceived. We have a two-fold view of the same fact. We see it first in the book of prophecy ; and then, perhaps, many centuries after, in the book of providence. We view it first, as it exists in the divine mind and immutable decree ; and then, as it is actually brought into being, with the most minute conformity to its prototype. Prophecy is thus a living, a permanent, a perpetual history, that shall continue to shed its precious light on the Church, and on the world, till time shall be no more.

Need we wonder, then, that God should frequently refer to it, in proof of his absolute and unrivalled perfection ? When he proclaims that peculiar honour which he had conferred on his ancient people, as the witnesses of his unity, he immediately appeals to the prophecies he had delivered to them, and to their illustrious ancestors, as verified by the event. “Ye are my witnesses, saith JEHOVAH :—that ye may know and believe me, and understand “that I am HE : before me there was no God formed, neither “shall there be after me.—I have declared, and have saved, and “I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you : “therefore ye are my witnesses, saith JEHOVAH, that I am “God.”^h—“I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me “there is no God. And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, “and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people ? “and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew “unto them. Fear ye not, neither be afraid : have not I told “thee from that time, and have declared it ? ye are even my “witnesses. Is there a God besides me ? yea, there is no god, “I know not any.”ⁱ—“Remember the former things of old, for “I am God, and there is none else, I am God, and there is none “like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from an- “cient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel “shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.”^k

We have formerly seen, that God appeals to his power manifested in creation, in proof of his being the only true God. But, in revealing himself to an obstinate and unbelieving people, he does not rest the evidence of his claim in this respect merely on his own testimony, or refer to that particular account of the work of creation which no one but himself could give. He produces another species of evidence, arising from his wonderful works in behalf of his Church, especially in relation to preceding predic-

^g Jer. x. 10, 11, 15, 16. ^h Isa. xliii. 10, 12. ⁱ Isa. xliv. 6—8.
^k Isa. xlv. 9, 10. See also chap. xlv. 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

tions. This is a combined proof of the most convincing kind. Is it true that the work of creation clearly demonstrates that He, to whom it belongs, is God, and God alone? While the wonderful works of JEHOVAH afford a display of the same almighty power which was manifested in creation; these, as verifying his word of prophecy, in which he has asserted his claim to creative power, incontestably prove the justness of his claim to the character of Creator, and at the same time shew that there is, that there can be "no God besides him." When, therefore, we find this assertion of creative power mingling itself in the prophecies concerning the deliverance of the Church, we are not to view it in the light of a parenthesis, merely expressing the dignity of the speaker. It is indeed a distinguished branch of that evidence, which is exhibited for the present confirmation of the faith of those who already believe, as declaring the certainty of the event; and at the same time denotes that the event itself, when it shall take place, shall, in its connexion, afford a sufficient ground of conviction to those who have formerly rejected the divine testimony. Of this kind of evidence, we have various examples. "Thus saith JEHOVAH thy Redeemer,—I am JEHOVAH that *maketh* all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself:—that *confirmeth* the word of his servant, and *performeth* the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be *inhabited*:—that saith to the deep, *Be dry*; and I will dry up thy rivers: that saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall *perform* all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be *built*; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be *laid*."^l What a beautiful connexion here, between creative power, omniscience, and the completion of prophecy in wonderful operations! To the same purpose is the following language: "Thus saith JEHOVAH.—Ask me of *things to come* concerning my sons.—I have *made* the earth, and *created* man upon it.—I have raised him up," that is, Cyrus, "in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways."^m In the use of this argument, faith may either descend from the creative power of God already believed, to a firm persuasion of the accomplishment of the prophecy; or, as excited by the manifestation of God's faithfulness and power in fulfilling the prophecy, it may ascend to a firm persuasion of his being the Creator and the only true God. Faith, indeed, as it still respects the power of God, finds great encouragement in viewing this perfection as manifested in creation. For there is no work, which it is called to believe, that can be too hard for Him who formed all things of nothing. Hence Abraham, when called to believe against hope, that he should be the father of a seed like the sand of the sea, found no obstacle to believing this, while he credited the doctrine of creation. "He believed God—who calleth the things that be not as though they were."ⁿ Hence also we are

^l Isa. xlv. 24—28.

^m Isa. xlv. 11—13. See also Jer. li. 14, 15.

ⁿ Rom. iv. 17.

commanded to commit our souls to him, as to a faithful Creator : where his infinite faithfulness and almighty power are conjoined, as affording a strong ground of confidence.

v. JEHOVAH hath manifested that he is the one true God, by *answering the prayers* of his worshipers : and many remarkable instances of this are recorded, for confirming our faith in this important doctrine. Elijah proposed to the people of Israel, that the decision of the controversy between JEHOVAH and Baal should turn on this hinge. He said to them, " Call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of JEHOVAH : and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God." They all approved of this as a most equitable condition. The false prophets " called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that *answered*.—When mid-day was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded." For the gods of the nations " have ears, but they hear not." The fire from heaven having consumed the sacrifice offered by Elijah, the multitude were convinced, that the God whom he worshipped was the only true God. " When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces, : and they said JEHOVAH he is the God ; JEHOVAH he is the God."^f In like manner, the deliverance which God gave the Jews from Sennacherib, when he sent forth his angel, and slew an hundred and eighty-five thousand of the Assyrians, was in answer to the prayer of Hezekiah. This good king sought deliverance, expressly as an evidence that JEHOVAH alone had a right to adoration. The plea was accepted, and the deliverance was given as the answer of his prayers. Hezekiah said, " O JEHOVAH our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art JEHOVAH God, even thou only." And this was the gracious answer : " Thus saith JEHOVAH the God of Israel, That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, I have heard."^g On this striking part of the character of her God, that he heareth prayer, the Church grounds her confidence as to the conversion of all nations to the faith : " O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.—By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation ; who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off on the sea."^r

Often hath our God vindicated his claim to this character, by answering the prayers of his Church in the time of her necessity, even when his operation hath been nowise miraculous. Hence Jeremiah uttered this language, during a famine occasioned by a great drought ; " Are there any among the vanities of the Gen-

^o 1 Pet. iv. 19.

^q 2 Kings xix. 19, 20.

^f 1 Kings xviii. 24, 26, 29, 39.

^r Psal. lxxv. 2, 5.

“ tiles that can cause rain ? or can the heavens give showers ? art not thou HE, O JEHOVAH our God ? ” HE, who alone can give rain ? “ therefore we will wait upon thee, for thou hast made all “ these things.”^s He signally manifested his power in this respect, in answer to the prayer of Elijah, both in judgment and in mercy. “ He prayed earnestly that it might not rain ; and it “ rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six “ months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and “ the earth brought forth her fruit.”^t

VI. The LORD hath still manifested that he is the only living and true God, by his *faithfulness* to his Church, and by *remembering* his *covenant*, especially when she hath turned to him. Therefore Solomon thus addresses him ; “ JEHOVAH God of Israel, “ there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or in earth beneath, “ who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants, that walk “ before thee with all their heart.”^u Of this faithfulness the Jews were standing witnesses, while they adhered to him. In various respects, it was successively attested by miraculous operation. As long as the land, according to the divine commandment, enjoyed her Sabbaths, they received a double harvest ; and while all the males, who were able to travel, were assembled at Jerusalem during the solemn feasts, the enemy never “ desired “ their land.” The heathen could boast nothing of this nature. Their gods made no difference between obedience and disobedience.

VII. The history of the work of *redemption*, in its various stages from the fall downwards, is one continued demonstration of the unity of God. It displays an evident unity of design and operation. The eye, that views the divine dispensations partially, may oppose one to another. It may oppose the patriarchal dispensation to that of the law, and both these to the gospel. Hence some of the early heretics represented the God of the Jews as quite a different being from the God of the Christians. But those who view this matter fairly and impartially, discern the most beautiful harmony. They perceive that the one illustrates and confirms the other ; that while the Mosaic dispensation derives its perfection from the Christian, the Christian derives its evidence from the Mosaic ; and that both hinge on that given to the patriarchs. Thus the Church finds the most abundant reason for this song ; “ He is the Rock, his work is perfect.”^v “ As for “ God, his way is perfect.—For who is God save JEHOVAH ? and “ who is a rock save our God ? ”^w

As there is the most beautiful harmony in all the parts of divine revelation, although written in a great variety of ages ; as they have all one great subject, the redemption of the Church by the

^s Jer. xiv. 22.

^v Deut. xxxii. 4.

^t James v. 17, 18.

^w 2 Sam. xxii. 31, 32.

^u 1 Kings viii. 23.

Son of God in the nature of man; as one spirit evidently pervades and animates the whole, uniformly, "testifying the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow;" a similar harmony is discernible in the operations of Providence. Of these we have an almost uninterrupted record for more than four thousand years. But they all evidently concentrate in one point. They are all directed to the work of redemption. They all conspire towards its accomplishment; some of them immediately, and others more remotely. The first gospel-promise, concerning the seed of the woman bruising the head of the serpent, is a key to all the succeeding history of Providence, in reference to individuals or to nations, to the Church or the world. We see the earth peopled, and in a little almost entirely stript of its inhabitants; cities built, and razed; empires founded, and brought to ruin; all in relation to that kingdom which shall never have an end, and that dominion which shall not be given to another people. "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people, according to the number of the children of Israel."^x It was for the sake of his Church, and as her Redeemer and Holy One, that he "sent to Babylon, and brought down all their nobles."^y When he warns her not to be "afraid of the Assyrian," her interest in the Messiah is pointed out as her security and consolation; "It shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed *because of the anointing*."^z

It was doubtless with a design to impress the Israelites with a sense of the unity, both of his essence, and of his love to the Church, that God so frequently designed himself from the relation which he bore to their fathers. He was pleased to take such names in succession; as if he meant to inform them, that notwithstanding the lapse of time, and the change of persons, he is still the same. When he appeared to Moses, and gave him a commission to proclaim liberation to his captives in Egypt, he commanded him to deliver this message; "JEHOVAH, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and my memorial unto all generations."^a As he uses this language in the present time, especially in the strictest connexion with that wonderful name, I AM THAT I AM; while it proves the unchangeableness of his love to these patriarchs, as still existing in a separate state, it proclaims the same unchangeable love to all their spiritual seed.

The Redeemer of his Church indeed assumed various designations of the same kind, according to her situation, and the pro-

^x Deut. xxxii. 8.

^y Isa. xliii. 14.

^z Isa. x. 27.

^a Exod. iii. 15.

gress of his work. When by an awful display of his justice he had separated the family of Noah from all the other inhabitants of the earth, it appeared proper to his infinite wisdom to separate one branch of this family from the rest. He therefore took the character of "JEHOVAH the God of Shem;"^b as the promise was to run in the line of his posterity. After being known by this character for several generations, when all the posterity of Shem were more or less corrupted, he separated one individual, not merely from the other families of this race, but from his father's family, as his true worshipper, and the ancestor of that illustrious personage in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed. He revealed himself as "the God of Abraham." Only one of all the sons of Abraham being the child of promise; he also called himself "the God of Isaac:" and with these two he conjoined the name of Jacob, as he loved him, while his brother Esau was rejected. In the history of Jacob, we have a striking instance of his zeal for preserving the doctrine of the divine unity. When Laban and he entered into a covenant, Laban used this form of swearing; "The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their Father, judge betwixt us." But "Jacob" swore by the fear of his father Isaac;^c that is, by the object of his fear. Jacob would not swear in the terms used by Laban. For he mentioned "the God of Abraham," as at the same time the God of Nahor, and of their father Terah. Now, we are told that Terah the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor, "served other gods, on the other side of the flood," or great river Euphrates.^d Laban swore by "the God of Abraham," before he was separated from his father's house: Jacob would swear only by that God of Abraham, who was worshipped by his immediate father Isaac, who had called Abraham from idolatry, and given him the promise of salvation in the seed of Isaac.*

When God had separated a peculiar people for himself, to express the nearness of their relation, the pleasure he had in them,

^b Gen. ix. 26.

^c Gen. xxxi. 53.

^d Josh. xxiv. 2.

* Here the remarks of a very ingenious writer merit our attention. Speaking of the pretensions made by other nations, allied to the Israelites, to the promise of the Messiah, he says: "It is these jealousies, and these pretensions,—that gave rise to the custom of calling God, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: for though he might as well have been called the God of Adam, the God of Enoch, and the God of Noah, forasmuch as all these patriarchs were also depositaries of the promise of the Messiah: yet it is probable that God was called so because of the particular promises that had been made to Abraham, secondly to Isaac, and lastly to Jacob, and in opposition to the pretensions of some people near neighbours to the Israelites, and jealous of their hopes: The God of *Abraham*, and not of *Lot*, as the Ammonites and Moabites, Lot's posterity, pretended; the God of *Isaac*, and not of *Ishmael*, as the Ishmaelites pretended; the God of *Jacob*, and not of *Esau*, as the Edomites, who were the offspring of Esau, pretended." Allix's Reflections upon the Books of the Holy Scriptures, Vol. i. p. 80.

especially as emblems of his spiritual seed, and to distinguish himself from all false gods, he took the name of "the God of Israel." He did not borrow a new designation from any individual among them : for he viewed Israel, in their collective capacity, as "his son, his first-born." He still delighted, however, in recognising his relation to their pious progenitors ; and in assuring them, that he would "perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which he had sworn from the days of old."^e

Thus was God pleased to link one revelation with another ; that he might, in the most expressive manner, teach his people the importance of the doctrine of the divine unity, and shew them the necessity of being on their guard against imposture ; while he at the same time gave them the most satisfying evidence that they had nothing of this kind to fear, when addressed by the God of their fathers. Such care did he manifest in this respect, that, in different instances, he in this manner connected the distinct revelations that he made to the same persons. When he appeared to Abram in the plain of Mamre, he reminded him that, although his situation was changed, he was still under the protection of the same God. He said to him ; "I am JEHOVAH that *brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees*, to give thee this land, to inherit it."^f When he commanded Jacob to leave Mesopotamia, and return to his own kindred ; that he might have no doubt as to the certainty of the call, and that he might know that it was the same God who had "fed him all his life long," and that his power was the same in all places, and at all times, he referred him to what had taken place many years before, saying ; "I am *the God of Bethel*, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where *thou vowedst a vow unto me*."^g Afterwards, he made himself known to Jacob by the same peculiar character. He said to him ; "Arise, go up to Bethel,—and make there an altar to God that *appeared unto thee, when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother*."^h

When the glorious consequences of the ascension of Christ are foretold, it is in this language : "The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham."ⁱ In conformity to this, and to illustrate the unity of the object of worship, and the unity of his work for the redemption of the Church, Peter declares to the Jewish council ; "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his son Jesus."^k

He had been known, for a long succession of ages, as "the God of Israel," and as his Redeemer. He had claimed this character, as attested by many temporal and typical redemptions ; and especially as JEHOVAH, "who brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt ;" and afterwards, in reference to

^e Mic. vii. 20.

^h Gen. xxxv. 1.

^f Gen. xv. 7.

ⁱ Psal. xlvii. 9.

^g Gen. xxxi. 13.

^k Acts iii. 13.

the deliverance from Babylon, as he "who led the seed of the "house of Israel out of the north country."^l In the language of prophecy, he had said to his own Son, as the glorious Antitype, and as the Representative of that spiritual Israel whom he had chosen to be his peculiar treasure; "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified."^m Now although, in the New Testament, he is called "the God of Abraham, of Isaac, "and of Jacob," and also "the God of Israel,"ⁿ in order to illustrate his unity both of essence and of operation; yet the spiritual redemption being accomplished, he is especially designed in relation to this. The God, and the Father, of Israel especially delights to be known as "the God and Father of our "Lord Jesus Christ," that true Israel in whom he hath been so signally glorified.

VIII. That JEHOVAH is the only true God, hath appeared from a variety of proofs, recorded in Scripture-history, of his power in *changing the heart*. He, even he only "knoweth the hearts of "all the children of men;"^o and he only can change them. In the former respect he displays his infinite wisdom; in the latter, his almighty power; in both, he appears to be God alone. Hence, when he promises a revival to his Church, by the gracious effusion of his Spirit, he declares that this should be to her an indubitable evidence of his exclusive right to the honours of deity: "Ye shall know that I am JEHOVAH, when I have opened your "graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, "and shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live."^p Both by the answer of prayer, and by the power of divine grace on his heart, Manasseh "knew that JEHOVAH he was God."^q

So great is the natural obduracy of the heart, that no power can subdue it but that which is divine. Hence it is described as a heart of stone; and the breaking of it is claimed by God as his prerogative: "Is not my word like as a fire, and as a hammer "that breaketh the rock in pieces?"^r Such is its deceitfulness, that God only can so know the disease as to apply an effectual remedy. He alone can discover it to the sinner, because he alone is perfectly acquainted with it. Therefore he says, "The heart "is deceitful above all things;—who can know it? I JEHOVAH "search the heart, and try the reins."^s This work also declares that it is he only "who formed the spirit of man within him." For as the renovation of the heart is called a creation, who can thus renew the heart, but he who created it at first? When the Psalmist refers to the wonderful works of JEHOVAH in proof of his exclusive deity, he particularly specifies this work of mercy. "Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O JEHOVAH, "neither are there any works like unto thy works.—Thou art

^l Jer. xxiii. 7, 8.

^o 1 Kings viii. 39.

^r Jer. xxiii. 29.

^m Isa. xlix. 3.

^p Ezek. xxxvii. 13, 14.

^q Chap. xvii. 9, 10.

ⁿ Luke i. 68.

^q 2 Chron. xxxii. 13.

^s Ps. lxxviii. 2.

"great, and dost wondrous things : thou art God alone.—
 "For great is thy mercy toward me ; and thou hast delivered.
 "my soul from the lowest hell."†

Is the God whom we profess to adore. the only living and true God ? Let us flee from idolatry in every form. While we detest the worship of false gods. or of saints and angels who are our fellow-servants ; let us beware of the love of the world. For covetousness is idolatry. He, who is God alone, hath a rightful claim to our whole hearts. This claim he makes on us, on the very ground of his absolute unity ; "Hear, O Israel, JEHOVAH "our God is one JEHOVAH. And thou shalt love JEHOVAH thy "God with all thine heart. and with all thy soul, and with all thy "might."‡ Let us say unto him in sincerity, "Whom have I "in heaven but thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire "besides thee." From him alone let us look for salvation. He only who is God, can be a Saviour. To give the name to any other, is blasphemy. Our God is equally jealous of his honour in this respect, as in that of his essential unity. "I" saith he, "even I am JEHOVAH, and besides me there is no Saviour."— "There is no God else besides me, a just God and a Saviour, there "is none besides me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the "ends of the earth ; for I am God, and there is none else."v

SECTION II.

The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity.—Proved from the History of Creation ;—of the Fall ;—of the Confusion of Tongues ;—of Redemption.

WE have seen, that the preservation of the doctrine of the divine unity, was one special end of the revelation given to the Israelites ; and that even the history contained in the sacred volume was meant to be a hedge around this important doctrine. But while the all-wise God manifested such care with respect to the unity of his essence, he would not conceal from his Church the manner of his subsistence in three distinct persons. This doctrine, indeed, like many others of the greatest moment, was more obscurely revealed before the coming of the Messiah. To so gross and carnal a people was God pleased to reveal himself, and in a period of such general polytheism, that it appeared proper to his infinite wisdom. to unfold this mystery more sparingly. The doctrines of essential unity and plurality of persons, are so tempered together in the language of inspiration, that while the Church could have no excuse for turning aside to polytheism, she could with as little reason conclude that her God subsisted in a single person. It is not merely in the doctrines,

† Psal. lxxxvi. 8, 10, 13. ‡ Deut. vi. 4, 5. v Isa. xlii. 11 ; xlv. 21, 22.

precepts or promises, that we are to search for this mystery of a plurality in unity. It so frequently beams forth, even in the historic page, that we are under a necessity of believing, that it was not one of the least designs that God had in view, in favouring the Church with the historical parts of Scripture, more fully to reveal this doctrine, as well as to preserve it uncorrupted.

The doctrine of a plurality, appears in the very first words of inspiration. God would not record the history of *creation*, without informing the Church, that the character of Creator was by no means to be confined to one person. It has often been observed, that this is taught in the words rendered *God created*, where we have a noun in the plural, joined with a verb in the singular number, plainly expressing a plurality in unity. That this is the genuine sense of the passage, appears from the work ascribed, in the next verse, to the Spirit of God, who is said to have “*moved on the face of the waters.*” By modern Jews, whom some Christians have followed, this expression has been rendered, “*a wind of God,*” or “*a mighty wind.*” But the firmament, or expanse, was not created till the second day. This includes the atmosphere which surrounds our earth: for the fowl is said to “*fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.*”^v Now, it cannot reasonably be supposed that there could be a mighty wind, or any wind at all, before the existence of an atmosphere.

If we turn to the gospel-history, we find a third person mentioned as engaged in the work of creation. “*All things were made by*” that Word, who “*in the beginning existed with God.*”^w

This plurality appears still more expressly, when the sacred historian gives an account of the creation of man: “*And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.*” But it is a plurality in unity: “*So God created man in his own image.*”^x It has been justly observed, that to this the language of Elihu, and of the royal Preacher, agrees: “*None saith, Where is God my Makers;*”^y and, “*Remember now thy Creators.*”^z Nothing can be more absurd than the various attempts which have been made to shew, that this language may be otherwise understood. God could never speak in this manner to angels, or to any second causes. For to whomsoever these words were addressed, they must have been co-operators with God in this divine work. They must have assisted him in making man. Philo the Jew expressly says that these words, *Let us make*, declare a plurality.^a That the Jewish writers in general view this language as including a mystery, not to be made known to the vulgar, and indeed studiously concealed by them from their abhorrence of Christianity, has been elsewhere demonstrated.^b

^v Gen. i. 20.

^w John i. 1—3.

^x Gen. i. 26, 27.

^y Job xxxv. 10.

^z Eccles. xii. 1.

^a De Confus. Ling. p. 270.

^b See Vindication of the Doctrine of Scripture, &c. vol. i. 5—8.

It is therefore unnecessary to enlarge here. I shall only add, that the modern Jews are so fully convinced that the doctrine of a plurality is contained in these words, as to wish to alter the reading. Instead of *Let us make man*, they incline to read, *Let man be made*; although the Samaritan text, the Septuagint, the Talmudists, and all their translations, whether ancient or modern, express the language in the same manner with our version.

The same important doctrine is introduced in the history of the *Fall*. That three-one God, who said, "Let us make man after our image," in the same character laments the loss of this image. "JEHOVAH God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us;" or, as some read the passage, "Behold the man, who was as one of us!"^c Here Philo observes; "These words, *as one of us*, are not put for one, but for more than one."^d The learned Allix has remarked, that the ancient Jewish writers maintain, that God "speaks not this to the angels, who had no common likeness to the unity or essence of God, but to Him who was the celestial Adam, who is one with God."^e To whom this character applies, we learn from the Targum of Jonathan on the place, who here speaks of "the only begotten in heaven."

This doctrine is also taught in the history of the *Confusion of Tongues*. "JEHOVAH said,—Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language."^f Here the Jews repeat their contemptible subterfuge, that God addresses his "house of judgment," that is, created angels. For it is an established doctrine with them, that "God does nothing without previously consulting with his family above."^g But it has justly been observed, that these words, if spoken to angels, would imply that God were one of them, or that he descended in the same manner with them, by a real change of place. Besides, in a moment to change one language into many, and to infuse these into the minds of men, who were utter strangers to them before, so that they should entirely forget their former modes of speech, is a work that far surpasses the power of angels, and can be accomplished by no being but that God, with whom to will and to do is the same.^h

It must be evident to every one, who reads the history of the Old Testament with any degree of attention, that an *Angel* is often introduced as speaking the language, performing the works, and accepting the worship, which exclusively belong to the Supreme Being. In other words, one, who is undoubtedly a divine person, often appears in a delegated character. Now, while it was the will of God in this manner constantly to remind his Church of the economy of redemption, he at the same time taught her a distinction of persons in the divine essence. It was

^c Gen. iii. 22.

^e Judgment of the Jewish Church, p. 42.

^g Maimonides, More Nevochim, P. ii. c. 6.

^h Vid. Bocharti Phaleg. lib. i. c. 15.

^d De Confus. ubi sup.

^f Gen. xi. 7.

this Angel who appeared to Abraham on different occasions, to Hagar, to Jacob, to Moses, to Joshua, to the Israelites at Bochim, to Gideon, to Manoah and his wife. But I enter not into a particular consideration of these appearances, having endeavoured to illustrate the character of this divine Messenger in another place.ⁱ There it has also been proved, that the law was given to the Israelites at Mount Sinai, by the second person of the adorable Trinity in the character of the Angel of JEHOVAH.^k It deserves particular attention, that at the very time that the God of Israel gave his people a law, by which they were to be distinguished from all the idolatrous nations around, one special design of which was to preserve the doctrine of the divine unity ; —at the very time that he pronounced that leading precept, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me ;” he, according to the Sacred History viewed in its connexion, sustained the character of an Angel, and was pleased to communicate the knowledge of this fact to his people. How can these apparent contradictions be reconciled, but by admitting that it was the will of God to reveal himself to his Church, as at the same time possessing essential unity and personal plurality ?

The more ancient Jewish writers declare, that two persons were engaged in promulgating the law. They say ; “The two first precepts were spoken by the Supreme Spirit, but he spoke all the rest by his Glory, who is called *El-Shaddai*, known to the fathers ; by whom the prophets foretold future events ; who is called *Jah* : in whom the Name of God is ; the Beloved of God who dwelt in the temple ; and the Mouth of the LORD ; and the Face of the LORD ; and the Rock ; and that Goodness which Moses saw, when he could not see God.”^l Elsewhere they call him “the *Schechinah*, by whom we draw near to God, and present our supplications to him ; who is that Angel in whom the name of God is, who is himself called God and JEHOVAH.” The change of person, in the promulgation of the law, asserted by these writers, is evidently a mere fancy. But their language deserves attention ; as it shews how fully they were convinced of the doctrine of a plurality in unity, when they introduced it in this manner.

It has been universally admitted by the friends of revelation, that the great end which God hath in view in the work of *Redemption*, is the display of his own adorable perfections. But there is doubtless another, although less attended to, nowise incompatible with this, nay, itself an eminent branch of the supreme end. This is the manifestation of the mystery of the Trinity, and of the mode of subsistence peculiar to each person in the divine essence. This must undoubtedly be viewed as included in the

ⁱ Vindication of the Doctrine of Scripture, vol. i. p. 99—117.

^k Ibid. p. 268—274, 280—283, 525.

^l Bechai, fol. 88. col. 3. 4. ap. Wits. Oecon. Fœd. lib. iv. c. 4.

one great design of the all-wise God, in our redemption; and it is evident that he hath still kept it in eye, in the revelation given to the Church, and especially in the history of that work, as it is recorded in the gospels. We may trace the doctrine of a Trinity in the accounts given of the old creation; but it appears with far superior evidence in the history of the new. This corresponds to the superior greatness of the work, and to the brighter and more extensive display of divine perfection.

Such was the state of the Church, as to admit of a more full manifestation of this mystery. It was more obscurely revealed to the patriarchs, and under the Mosaic economy. This was analogous to the general character of the revelation then made; as well as to the state of the Church, yet in her infancy, and exposed to constant temptations to polytheism, from the situation of all the surrounding nations. But "when the fullness of the time was come," that the gospel should be preached to every creature, and the kingdom of Satan fall as lightning from heaven, in the overthrow of heathen darkness; there were no such impediments to the more clear revelation of this mysterious doctrine. The rest of the divine conduct indeed rendered this necessary. God had now "sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." The ends of this mission could not be accomplished, without a full revelation of the character of this illustrious Messenger. He could not otherwise receive that homage from the Church, which he merited as her Redeemer, and which was necessary, in order to her salvation. Now, his character, as essentially the Son of God, and at the same time a divine Messenger, could not be properly unfolded, without a declaration both of the paternity of the First Person, and of that wonderful dispensation according to which the Second, although equal in power and glory, voluntarily "emptied himself." Nor could the unity of the work of redemption, as pervading all the dispensations given to the Church, and the beautiful harmony of the law and the gospel, be otherwise displayed. Without a full revelation of this mystery, how could it have been known that he who appeared in the end of ages as sent of God, was the very same person who had formerly led the Church, as the Angel of his face; that He who now brought spiritual redemption to his folk, was no other than that Angel-Redeemer who had already so frequently delivered them from temporal calamities?

If this mystery be unknown or disbelieved, there can be no faith in Christ as the Mediator between God and men. For he who believes not that the Son is in the Father, and the Father in the Son, as to identity of essence, while at the same time there is a distinction of persons, denies the voluntary subjection of the Son to the Father in the eternal covenant, and thus the whole foundation of his merit and of our salvation. In relation to the work of our redemption, and in the history given of it, are revealed

various internal actings of the divine persons towards each other, as well as those of an external nature. The Father appoints, gives, sends, prepares a human nature for his Son ; the Son undertakes, gives himself, comes, assumes this nature

From the history given of the conception of Christ, we find that three divine persons were engaged in the creation of this "new thing in the earth." The Father appears in the character of "the Highest ;" the Third Person, as "the Holy Ghost," and "the Power of the Highest ;" and the Second, as "the Son of God."^m When this wonderful Person, the incarnate Word, was to be manifested to Israel at his baptism, each divine Person concurred in the work. The Father testified his presence and approbation by a voice from the excellent glory, announcing Jesus as his beloved Son ; and the Holy Ghost descended like a dove, and rested on him.ⁿ The history of his death, viewed in its connexion, affords a proof of a similar kind. As "it pleased JEHOVAH," in the person of the Father, sustaining the character of Judge, to bruise the Son as our Surety ; and as he, having power over his own life, commended his spirit into the hands of his Father, thus presenting unto him a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour ; he did so "through the Eternal Spirit." The same thing appears from the resurrection of Jesus. He was "powerfully declared to be the Son of God in his resurrection from the dead ;"^o for he had "power to take again" that which no one could take from him. This work is frequently ascribed to God, where the term evidently denotes the First Person. "God hath raised up Jesus again ; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."^p As he was "put to death in the flesh, he was quickened by the Spirit," by that Spirit of holiness, "by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison."^q Nor is this less evident from the account given of the effusion of the Spirit. This is undoubtedly a divine work ; and it is described as belonging to each adorable Person. Jesus had foretold that the Comforter should come, that himself should send him,^r and that he should at the same time be sent by the Father.^s Accordingly, from the account given of this wonderful event by the apostle Peter, which is left on record for the instruction of the Church, we find that each divine Person was engaged in accomplishing it : "Jesus having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear."^t

It is undeniable, that one special end, which Christ had in view in his miraculous works, was to confirm his doctrine with respect to his equality with the Father. When he gave thanks at the tomb of Lazarus, before raising him from the dead, it was be-

^m Luke i. 35.

ⁿ Acts xiii. 33.

^s Chap. xiv. 26.

ⁿ Mat. iii. 16, 17.

^q 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19.

^t Acts ii. 33.

^o Rom. i. 4.

^r John xvi. 7.

cause of the people who stood by, that they might believe that the Father had sent him ; and sent him as a Messenger invested with divine power, because essentially possessing divine perfection. For he had previously said to his disciples : " This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby ;" and taught Martha, that if she " would believe, she would see the glory of God," in seeing the manifestation of that power which essentially belonged to himself, as " the Resurrection and the Life."^u When he cured the man sick of the palsy, it was in order to prove that he had " power on earth to forgive sin ;" while he admitted the principle held by the scribes, that no one could forgive sins but God only.^v On different occasions he refers to his miraculous works, as irrefragable evidences of his having the same essence with the Father ; and of the mutual inexistence, as some have expressed it, of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Father, in respect of this essential unity, while there is at the same time a real distinction of persons. When his enemies accused him of blasphemy, because he said, " I am the Son of God," " making himself God ;" he replied, " If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works ; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him."^w To Philip, when desiring to see the Father, he said, " Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me ; or else believe me for the very work's sake."^x The Evangelist John, when referring to the signs recorded in the preceding history, subjoins this declaration ; " These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Son of God."^y That he appropriates this character to Jesus, as expressive of supreme deity, is evident from the uniform tenor of the gospel which bears his name.^z

The doctrine of the Trinity is peculiarly elucidated by the history of redemption ; as it does not merely exhibit all the adorable Persons as engaged in this work, but ascribes a peculiar operation to each Person. The contrivance of our redemption is ascribed to the Father ; the purchase of it to the Son ; and the effectual application of this purchased redemption to the Holy Spirit. The Father sends his Son as our Surety ; the Son cheerfully comes in this character ; and the Holy Spirit is sent by both. The purpose of election is more immediately ascribed to the Father ; the objects of his love are all chosen in Christ ; and they, who were thus chosen from eternity, are in time chosen out of the world, and separated for himself, by the renewing and sanctifying work of the Spirit.

^u John xi. 4, 25, 40, 42, comp.

^v Mark ii. 7, 10.

^w John x. 33, 36—38.

^x John xiv. 11.

^y John xx. 31.

^z See, for a farther illustration of this subject, *Vindication of the Doctrine of Scripture, &c.* Book ii. chap. 6. *Of the Evidence of our Saviour's Divinity, from his Miracles.*

Nor is this all. The peculiar operation of each Person, in the work of our salvation, is perfectly analogous to the order of subsistence in the Holy Trinity ; and thus beautifully illustrates the mutual relations of the divine Persons. All the external works of God, indeed, are common to each Person ; as the divine nature is the same indivisible principle of operation. Yet these works are distinctly ascribed to the three Persons, because each Person operates according to the order of subsistence. In the old creation, the Father called all things into being, by his co-essential Word, communicating life immediately by the Spirit, as exercising a generating power on the unformed mass. When God created man, the First Person formed him by the Second, as his essential Image, giving him life, both natural and moral, by the Third as “ the Spirit of life.”^a Yet this implies no inferiority, or mere instrumentality, in any of the adorable Persons ; but only the most perfect order and harmony. The case is the same in the new creation. It seems most consistent with divine wisdom, that he who is first in the order of subsistence should rather *send* than be *sent* ; that the Son, who is “ the image of the “ invisible God,” should procure the restoration of that blessed image lost by sin ; and that he, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, should be sent by both, to quicken those who are spiritually dead. This distinct operation indeed, as it corresponds with the order of subsistence, beautifully harmonizes with the distinguishing character belonging to each Person. He, who is essentially the Father, assumes the character of paternity, in a federal respect, towards those who are orphans and aliens. The only begotten Son of God is sent forth, made under the law, that they may “ receive the adoption of sons,” and appears as “ the first-born among many brethren.” The adorable Spirit, “ the breath of JEHOVAH,” breathes on the slain, that they may live ; giving them a new heart and a right spirit. He, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, unites the sinner to both.

Is it “ life eternal to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ “ whom he hath sent ?” Hath no one the Father, who “ denieth “ the Son ?” Can no one honour the Father, “ who honoureth “ not the Son ?” Is it the Spirit alone who quickeneth, and who teacheth us to “ know the things that are freely given us of “ God ?” Can no man “ say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the “ Holy Ghost ?” Is it through Christ that “ we have access by “ one Spirit unto the Father ?” Let us bless God for the revelation of the mystery of a Trinity in unity ; and especially because he hath revealed it so clearly in the history of our redemption, in relation to that work in which a peculiar operation belongs to each adorable Person, in which the love of a three-one God is so wonderfully displayed, in which we discern so blessed a harmony, not only of divine perfections, but of divine Persons ! In all our worship, let us view God according to this revelation,

^a Gen. i. 27 ; ii. 7.

ascribing glory to him "who is, and who was, and who is to come, and to the Seven Spirits which are before his throne, and to Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first-begotten from the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth." Let us earnestly desire communion with this three-one God ; with the Father, in his love as the spring of our salvation ; with the Son, in all that grace which he hath purchased by his blood ; and with the Holy Ghost, in the whole extent of his efficacious operation. In order to this, let us press after union with Christ, that in him we may be united to the Father by that one Spirit who proceeds from both, and who is conferred by both as the Spirit of adoption. Let us cultivate love to the brethren, as members of the same mystical body, desiring to be "one heart and one soul ;" that although many, we maybe one, and thus be assimilated, in our weak measure, to the blessed Trinity in respect of unity ; as Jesus prays in behalf of his Church ;— "That they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee ; that they also may be one in us.—I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one ; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me,^b

SECTION III.

Of the Wisdom of God.—Of his Power.—Of that character, The LORD of Hosts.

IN the sacred volume, we have an history of the divine perfections. These are not only declared in a doctrinal way, but also historically delineated. They are not merely exhibited as objects of faith ; by their wonderful effects, they become as it were visible to the very senses of men. Often in one event, one perfection appears more conspicuous than others, like an "apple of gold, set in pictures of silver." In another, different perfections beam forth with distinguished lustre. But whether the display be limited to one, or extended to more, such are the characters of the work as to proclaim a divine agent.

It might be shewed, that we have here an history of the *Wisdom* of God. This perfection is displayed in the work of creation. All things are declared to be "very good,"^c as exactly corresponding to the pattern in the divine mind, and to the end for which they were made. We may therefore justly say ; "O LORD, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all."^d The same wisdom is conspicuous in the works of Providence. How often hath God "brought to nought the coun-

^b John xvii. 21, 23.

^c Gen. i. 31. ^d Psal. civ. 24.

“sel of the wicked ;” now, by “making their devices of none effect,” although the result of the most mature deliberation, and displaying all the craft of the old serpent ; then, by turning their very schemes of destruction on their own heads ! Pharaoh said, in the height of his resentment, and in the insolence of his pride ; “I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil ; my lust shall be satisfied upon them ; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.”^c But this very pursuit was overruled for his more signal overthrow.

The wisdom of God might be illustrated from the consideration of the means employed for the preservation of the truth. The great longevity of the antediluvian patriarchs, and of some of those who lived after the flood, was evidently designed in subserviency to the preservation of that precious doctrine revealed to the Church, while it was only transmitted by tradition. A particular family was afterwards separated for this purpose. At length, when idolatry had overrun the world, revelation was committed to writing, and a whole nation were employed as its guardians. As the Sacred History exhibits the completion of great part of the prophecies contained in the volume of inspiration, we have another evidence that its author is “the only wise God,” who “knoweth the end from the beginning.”

Did we particularly consider the history of redemption, we would at every step find reason to admire “the manifold wisdom of God ;” as displayed in the comprehensive nature of the first revelation of grace, which is a beautiful summary of all that hath since been communicated to the Church ; in its being expressed in a free promise ; in the seasonableness of this revelation ; in the choice of that divine Person, as the immediate Revealer, who was himself to bruise the head of the serpent ; in the institution of sacrifices, as a perpetual and sensible testimony of the way in which sin should actually be expiated ; in the salvation of the family of Noah by an ark, and by means of water, as figurative of the salvation of all who believe ; in the appointment of a typical priesthood and royalty, as well as in raising up prophets, who were at the same time messengers employed by the Angel of the covenant, and types of his future appearance in our world ; in the whole frame of the Mosaic dispensation, as a shadow of good things to come ; in the gradual increase of the light of revelation, as the more perfect day approached ; “when the Sun of righteousness” should himself “arise with healing in his wings.”

How wonderful the display of divine wisdom, in the constitution of the mediatory person of Jesus ; in the formation of his body, of the same substance with ours, yet without sin ; in the choice of the time of his appearance, when “the world by wisdom knew not God” in the means employed for the accomplishment of the prophecy as to his being born in Bethlehem, and for

making it legally known that he was of the lineage of David ; in the excitement of a general expectation, among Gentiles as well as Jews, of the appearance of an illustrious and extraordinary person about this time ; in the choice of his forerunner, in respect of the tribe of which he sprung, his immediate parents, the place of his nativity and education, his manner of life, his peculiar ministry, his great acceptableness to the people, his eminent faithfulness and intrepidity, his want of personal acquaintance with the Messiah, and the occasion and circumstances of his testimony to him !

Here we might contemplate this perfection as displayed in the doctrine which Christ taught ; in the character of his miracles ; in the choice of the time and circumstances in which many of them were wrought, and in their peculiar significance as emblems of his spiritual work ; in the employment of so unlikely a mean as his own death, for destroying the power of sin, Satan and death ; in his being betrayed by one of his disciples, the natural consequence of which must have been, that had the traitor known any thing detrimental to the character of his Master, he would undoubtedly have published it for his own vindication ; in making the doctrine of the cross the instrument of subduing the world to the obedience of faith.—But the nature of this work will not admit of so particular a discussion.

We might also take an extensive view of divine *Power*. For the sacred volume contains a striking and an ample history of this perfection. Its glory illuminates the records of creation. No language can be imagined, that could so forcibly express the infinite ease with which God effected this work, as that employed by the inspired historian. “ God said, Let light be, and light was.” He “ spake, and it was done : he commanded, and it stood fast.” His providential government is one continued display of omnipotence. “ Day unto day uttereth speech.”

The Sacred History, in a great variety of instances, illustrates the meaning of that name which God so frequently uses,—JEHOVAH SABAOth, or the LORD OF Hosts.—a name which peculiarly expresses his almighty power and universal dominion. Some have supposed, that Sabaoth is one of the proper names of God. But it is evident, that as the word signifies *hosts* or *armies*, he is called the LORD, or God of hosts, because the various hosts of creatures are all the work of his hands, and obey his will. This is just an expression of his omnipotence. Hence we find, that the language of the seraphim, “ Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts,”^f is applied to him by the four living creatures, with a change of expression denoting the meaning of the name ; “ Holy, holy, holy LORD God Almighty.”^g

His is “ the army of heaven.” The different orders of holy

^f Isa. vi. 3.

^g Rev. iv. 8.

angels are all his hosts, his "ministers that do his pleasure." He employs them as ministers both of providence and grace, and as instruments either of judgment, or of mercy. By an angel, the vain-glorious Herod is smitten,^h and by an angel the faithful servant of Jesus is delivered.ⁱ Sometimes one of these heavenly messengers sweeps away embattled hosts with "the besom of destruction." Thus an angel smote, in the camp of the Assyrians, an hundred fourscore and five thousand.^k At other times, an army of angels is employed as a guard to one man. When the king of Syria sought to make Elisha his prisoner, and sent to Dothan "horses, and chariots, and a great host," which compassed the city; "behold, the mountain," on which it was built, "was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."^l When the angels of God met Jacob on his way to his father's house, he said, "This is God's host."^m "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation?"ⁿ

He hath also legions of *devils* at his command, whom he employs, either for the trial of his saints, as in the experience of Job;ⁿ or for the punishment of his adversaries, as we learn from the account given of his judgments on the Egyptians; "He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them."^o These hellish hosts acknowledged Jesus as their Lord; confessing that he had power to torment them, or to send them whithersoever he pleased.

Wicked men must also be numbered among his hosts. For he "maketh the wrath of man to praise him; the remainder of wrath shall he restrain." Hence he calls Nebuchadnezzar his servant;^p and all wicked men are his servants in the same sense: for he overrules their very wickedness for accomplishing his own purposes. "His servants they are to whom they obey:" and although disobedient to the precept, they, without any intention on their part, as well as without any constraint on his, fulfil the purpose. For accomplishing his designs of judgment, often he employs them against one another. Thus did he testify his displeasure with the Midianites,^q and afterwards with the Philistines,^r when they sought the destruction of his people. He "set every man's sword against his fellow." Often hath he employed them as his instruments in punishing a professing people for their iniquities. Sennacherib, notwithstanding all his boasting and stoutness of heart against the God of Israel, was only his sword. That God whom he blasphemed, had sent him although he knew it not, "against a hypocritical nation." He was merely executing a commission, which he could not read; and fulfilling all God's counsel, although he viewed it as

^h Acts xii. 23.

^l 2 Kings vi. 15. 17.

^o Psal. lxxviii. 49.

^r 1 Sam. xiv. 20.

ⁱ Acts xii. 7. 11.

^m Gen. xxxii. 1, 2.

^p Jer. xxvii. 6.

^k 2 Kings xix. 35.

ⁿ Job i. 12; ii. 6.

^q Judg. vii. 22.

wholly his own.^s Often also have the wicked been employed as instruments of deliverance to the Church. The kings of the Medes invaded Chaldea, with no other design than to gratify their ambition or revenge. But it was the purpose of the Most High to break in pieces the proud empire of Babylon, that his captives might be delivered. He therefore describes the plan, preparations, warlike operations and success, as proceeding wholly from himself: and, to express the absolute certainty of the event, although at the distance of some centuries, he employs such language as if he rather declared what was past, than foretold what was future. He appears as a sovereign leader, issuing forth his orders to his vassals, which they must necessarily execute; nay, as an invisible, but all-powerful agent, influencing all their counsels. "Make bright the arrows; gather the shields: the LORD hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes: for his device is against Babylon, to destroy it; because it is the vengeance of the LORD, the vengeance of his temple.—The LORD of Hosts hath sworn by himself, saying, Surely I will fill thee with men as with caterpillars.—Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her: call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz, appoint a captain against her, cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillars. Prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes, the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominion."^t Observe how he describes the cruel Medes and Persians, and the other heathen nations whom he was pleased to employ in this work:—"I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness. The noise of a multitude in the mountain, like as of a great people: a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the LORD of hosts mustereth the hosts of the battle. They come from a far country, even the LORD and the weapons of his indignation to destroy the whole land."^u

His *own people* may justly be reckoned among his hosts. The typical Israelites are denominated "the hosts of JEHOVAH."^w This name especially respects the Church under the New Testament, consisting of converts belonging to every kindred; and therefore called "the goodly heritage of the hosts of nations."^x The Church appears "terrible as an army with banners." All her genuine members have been "volunteers in the day of his power." They have enlisted under his banner. He employs them in his wars. He teaches their hands to war, and their fingers to fight. He manages them in a different manner from that in which he exercises his power over the wicked. He works in them, not in opposition to their own intentions, but according

^s Isa. x. 5—7.

^w Exod. xii. 41.

^t Jer. li. 11. 14. 27. 28.

^x Jer. iii. 19.

^u Isa. xiii. 3—5.

to the habitual inclinations of their hearts, as renewed by his grace. They obey his will on earth, in resemblance of the holy army above. Like the angels of bliss, they in their inferior degree are "his hosts, his ministers, that do his pleasure." It is therefore their daily prayer; "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." They have "a leader and commander," who conducts them to certain victory. They "overcome Satan, through the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony." They also overcome the world. And, what is more than either, they are conquerors over themselves. Employing them as his hosts, he brings glory to his name by the warfare itself, and by its happy termination.

This character is in a peculiar sense conferred on his servants in the ministry. When the Levites were admitted into the service of God, they were said to "enter into the host," and to "war the warfare."^y Hence this very language is adopted by the apostle Paul, when addressing Timothy:^z and the ministers of the New Testament, in declaring the glad-tidings of salvation, are described as a great host or army: "JEHOVAH gave the word: Great was the army of those that published it."^a

The same designation is given to the *heavenly bodies*. Hence are they so often called "the host of heaven;"^b not merely as signifying their number, but their order, beauty, and constant obedience to the divine command. It deserves our attention, that as not only the heathen worshipped the heavenly bodies, but the Israelites discovered a strong attachment to this species of idolatry, God, in revealing himself to his Church, often asserts his absolute dominion over this host, and also occasionally declares the foundation of this dominion. He announces himself as their Lord, because they are all the work of his hands: "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.—I, even my hands have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded."^{*} He hath made the "lights in the firmament of heaven,—for seasons;"^c and as he is pleased to dispense their influences, he either blesses the inhabitants of the earth with abundance, or punishes them with want; he preserves them in health, or visits them with sickness. Hence he connects this name with a declaration of his dominion over the host of heaven, in relation to the earth: "Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of Hosts is his name."^d He hath at times given more aston-

^y Num. iv. 3. 23.

^z 1 Tim. i. 18.; 2 Tim. ii. 3, 4.

^a Psal. lxxviii. 11.

^b Deut. iv. 19.; Isa. xxxiv. 4.

^{*} Isa. xl. 26.; xlv. 12.

^c Gen. i. 14.

^d Jer. xxxi. 35.

ishing displays of this dominion. "The sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves on their enemies:—for JEHOVAH fought for Israel."^e Deborah, it is probable, in her song of triumph, alludes, to some extraordinary circumstances not recorded in the history of the defeat of Jabin's host: "They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera."^f

The *elements* are also his hosts. "Fire and hail, snow and vapour, stormy wind fulfil his word."^g He swept away an ungodly world with a deluge of water. He destroyed the Philistines with thunder;^h and sent fire from heaven on the messengers of the king of Israel, who came to take the prophet Elijah.ⁱ He made the earth to open and swallow up the rebellious company of Korah. When the haughty Pharaoh refused to acknowledge and obey the God of heaven and earth, he armed all the elements in his quarrel. He "sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground."^k He turned their water into blood. That very river, on which Egypt depends for the means of life, became an instrument of death.^l The earth rose in arms against its guilty inhabitants. Every particle of dust was furnished with a sting, and caused at once pain and self-abhorrence.^m The atmosphere became too gross a medium for transmitting the light of heaven.ⁿ That air, which formerly supported life, was found to be merely a vehicle for the pestilence.^o At length God "did blow with his wind;" and Pharaoh, with all his host, sunk as lead in the mighty waters.

All the *irrational* creatures are his hosts. "Beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying fowl,—praise the name of the LORD." To punish the idolatry of the mingled nations, which the king of Assyria settled in the land of Israel, "JEHOVAH sent lions among them."^p Bears were the instruments of his vengeance on the children, who mocked his servant Elisha.^q To the rebellious prophet, the belly of a great fish is provided, as at the same time a prison and a place of preservation. He punished the murmuring of the Israelites, by sending fiery serpents to destroy them.^r At his command, such legions of frogs assaulted the Egyptians, that the combined power of Egypt was insufficient to vanquish them.^s Often hath he poured contempt on the power and on the pride of man, by making the meanest or the minutest creatures the messengers of destruction. The god Herod is eaten by worms; as if the true God would, by his end, remind him of the meanness of his origin, and of the contemptible impotence of that divinity ascribed to him by his minions.^t

^e Josh. x. 13, 14.

^f 1 Sam. vii. 10.

^g Exod. vii. 19—21.

^h Exod. ix. 15.; Psal. lxxviii. 50.

ⁱ 2 Kings ii. 24.

^j Acts xii. 21—23.

^k Judg. v. 20.

^l 2 Kings i. 12.

^m Exod. viii. 16, 17.

ⁿ Numb. xxi. 6.

^o Psal. cxlviii. 8.

^p Exod. ix. 23.

^q Exod. x. 21—23.

^r 2 Kings xvii. 25.

^s Exod. viii. 5, 6.

When he would punish the oppressors of his people, "he spake, and there came divers sorts of flies and lice in all their coasts.—" He spake, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that "without number; and did eat up all the herbs in their land, and "devoured the fruit of their ground."^u He dignifies these mean creatures, the locust, the canker-worm, the caterpillar, and the palmer-worm, with the character of his "great army;" because, as he sends them for the punishment of a guilty people, they certainly execute his commission.^v To convince the Israelites, how easy it was for him to give them the possession of the land of promise, he informs them he had a very puny host that could easily accomplish the work: "I will send hornets before thee, "which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, "from before thee;" and his promise was verified in their experience.^w When we consider these things, justly may we say with Bildad; "Is there any number of his armies?"^x

Our God is still known as "the Lord of hosts," not only in his conduct towards his Church, but in her. The more sensible displays he hath formerly given of his power, may be viewed as emblems of his continued, but more spiritual, operation. As all true Israelites are "the hosts of JEHOVAH," he honours his servants with the name of *angels*.^y Did the stars in their courses fight against Sisera? He "holdeth the seven stars in his "right-hand," and employs them in fighting against his enemies. Did he cause the sun to stand still on Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon? In carrying on the work of redemption, and for accomplishing his purposes of mercy towards the Church, he hath often covered the *sun* with blackness, and converted the *moon* into blood. He hath made the greatest political luminaries to stand still, to alter their courses, or to hide their heads in darkness.^z To express the honour put on the prophets, called his two witnesses, they are described as exercising a delegated power over the elements. "If any man will hurt them, *fire* proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies. "These have power to shut *heaven*, that it rain not in the days of "their prophecy; and have power over *waters* to turn them to "blood, and to smite the *earth* with all plagues."^a Did God employ the weakest and vilest instruments in punishing the Egyptians and Canaanites? This fitly represents the wonderful display of his almighty power by means of the gospel, in choosing "the "base things of the world, and things which are despised, yea, "and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are."

This name affords comfort to the Church in the most trying and perilous times. This "name of the God of Jacob defends" her. "Although an host encamp" against her, in this she may

^u Psal. cv. 31, 34, 35.

^v Exod. xxiii. 28.; Josh. xxiv. 12.

^y Rev. ii. 1, 8. &c. ^z Rev. vi. 12.; viii. 12.

^w Joel ii. 25.

^x Job xxv. 3.

^a Rev. xi. 5, 6.

be confident. He, who is with her, is mightier by far than all that can be against her. She may be encompassed, not by one host only, but by many. But they are the hosts of JEHOVAH, under his government and control, how malevolent soever their designs. We may therefore still sing ; "The LORD of hosts is "with us ; the God of Jacob is our refuge."

It is a special ground of consolation, that this designation belongs to Jesus the Saviour of the Church. That King, who appeared in vision to Esaias, was the LORD of hosts ;^b and we know that it was the glory of Christ, which the prophet saw.^c Jesus is often represented as the bridegroom and husband of the Church : but of this glorious Husband it is said, "The LORD of hosts is "his name."^d Christ is that King and "Lord of glory," who ascended in the midst of his angels. And "who is this King of "glory ? The LORD of hosts, he is the king of glory."^e

This character conveys a comfortable assurance of the Church's triumph over all her incorrigible enemies. The Lord comforts his Church with the proclamation of this name, as her security for victory over ancient Babylon. "Thus saith the LORD of "hosts, The children of Israel, and the children of Judah, were "oppressed together ; and all that took them captives held "them fast ; they refused to let them go: Their Redeemer is "strong ; The LORD of hosts is his name : he shall thoroughly "plead their cause, that he may give rest to the land, and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon."^f As that kingdom of graven images was a type of mystical Babylon, the fate of the one prefigured that of the other. Hence we are directed to the same almighty power, as the ground of our confidence : "Strong is "the LORD God who judgeth her."^g

SECTION IV.

Of the Holiness of God.—Of his Justice, as manifested in the Threatening and Curse of the Law ;—in the Antediluvian History ;—in the Deluge ;—in the Destruction of the Cities of the Plain ;—in the Resemblance between Sin and Punishment ;—in the Mosaic Economy ;—in the Sufferings of the Messiah.

ACCORDING to the nature of this work, it is not necessary that we should nicely distinguish between the Holiness and Justice of God. As his holiness is the perfect rectitude of his nature, according to which he infinitely loves what is morally good, and hates what is evil ; his justice, as it regards his creatures at least,

^b Isa. vi. 5. ^c John xii. 41.

^e James ii. 1. ; Psal. xxiv. 10.

^g Rev. xviii. 8.

^d Isa. liv. 5.

^f Jer. l. 33, 34.

is the actual display of this essential holiness. God hath manifested his holiness, indeed, in various respects, in which there was no call for the operation of his justice. A few of these may be mentioned.

He displayed his holiness in making all things very good. For the evil of sin was not the work of God. His rational creatures were endowed with moral goodness. As revelation is meant for man, a very particular account is given of his original rectitude. He was created "after the image of God, in his likeness;" that is, "in righteousness and true holiness."^h

To his rational creatures he also gave a perfect law. Man was subjected to a positive precept. But we are by no means to suppose that the law was confined to this. The moral law was written on his heart by the finger of God: and this, as to the substance of it, is the transcript of infinite holiness. In every respect, it is holy, just and good. It was so, even in its covenant-form. It is so, as a rule of life to believers. Although they are in no respect justified before God by their obedience to this law; yet, such is his holiness, that he requires that they should be "perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect," and still press forward toward this perfection.

That law of ceremonies which God gave his ancient people, contains a striking representation of his holiness. Whence did God enjoin so many washings and purifications? Had they, or could they have, any virtue in themselves? Often did he assure them of the contrary. But by the observation of these, according to the imperfect nature of the dispensation, he would still remind them of his infinite hatred of sin. Did the touch of a dead body communicate ceremonial defilement? Thus the Supreme Lawgiver taught, in the most lively manner, the contaminating nature of all the actions of a natural man, and the necessity of being "purged from dead works, that we may serve the living God." Why were there so many persons, places and things, consecrated by him, as partaking of an external holiness? Can mere outward rites render a man well-pleasing to God? Can any place be in itself more sacred than another, to him who is LORD of the whole earth? Can irrational or inanimate creatures be the subjects of true holiness? Nothing of this kind was ever meant. But it was the will of God, by these shadows and sensible representations, daily to inculcate on a gross and obdurate people the necessity of purity of heart, of being really devoted to the LORD, of being holy in all manner of conversation.

In a great variety of instances, the holiness of God is practically demonstrated by the operations of his justice. 1. Deeply to *impress the mind* of man with the *majesty of divine justice*, seems

^h Gen i. 26.; Eph. iv. 24.

to have been one special design of the Spirit of inspiration, especially in the writings of the Old Testament. This appears as the most prominent feature in the history given us of the covenant made with Adam. We have scarcely had time to contemplate and admire the goodness of God in the formation of man, and in the ample provision made for his sustenance and comfort ; ere we are made to tremble at the appearance of a more awful perfection. A promise this covenant undoubtedly contained ; but it lay hid in that terrific threatening, “ In the day thou eatest, —dying thou shalt die.”ⁱ How soon is the voice of blessing succeeded by that of the curse ! The one would almost seem to be uttered, only to give tenfold energy to the other. The effect of the blessing, pronounced on the earth, has barely appeared, ere we are aroused by that alarming denunciation, ever since verified in the experience of guilty man ; “ Cursed is the ground “ for thy sake.”^k When God had created “ an help meet” for man, he *blessed* them both, saying, “ Be fruitful and *multiply*.” When he pays them another visit, this very increase, which originally flowed from the blessing, is converted into a curse ; “ I “ will greatly multiply thy sorrow, and thy conception.”^l How quickly is the threatening changed into a fatal sentence actually pronounced ; “ Unto dust shalt thou return !” No sooner is it pronounced, than it is partly executed ; “ So he drove out the “ man,” drove him out of that delightful garden, which had been created for his use, and in which he had been placed but a short time before.

We advance but a single step further in the history of mankind, when we are arrested by another display of divine justice. The first man, born of woman, receives from the Supreme Judge a solemn warning as to the necessary connexion between sin and punishment. To Cain he said, “ If thou dost not well, sin lieth “ at the door,”^m that is, it lieth like a-beast of prey, ready to devour ; certain punishment awaits thee. And no sooner had he transgressed, than his sin laid hold of him, in its necessary consequence. Formerly the earth was cursed for man’s sake. But here the curse seems to expand, and to acquire an increase of force, with the increase of human guilt : “ Now art thou cursed “ from the earth.”ⁿ Man was driven out of paradise before. In this first-born of man, the curse is so forcibly exemplified, that he speaks of himself as an outcast from creation : “ Behold thou “ hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth.”^o In this language, however, he only expresses the more remarkable execution of the curse, primarily executed on his parents. For he thus explains it ; “ From thy face shall I be hid, and I shall “ be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth.”

The history of about sixteen hundred years is next condensed in a few lines. Here, although the life of man was at its great-

ⁱ Gen. ii. 17.

^k Chap. i. 24. ; iii. 17.

^l Chap. i. 28. ; iii. 16.

^m Chap. iv. 7.

ⁿ Chap. iii. 17. ; iv. 11.

^o Chap. iii. 24. ; iv. 14.

est extent, the narrative is most abridged, as if the Spirit of inspiration would teach us, that the present life, even at its utmost stretch, is but a shadow ; and that the longest period, when past, seems to the mind, equally with the shortest, as a tale that hath been told. We are hurried down the stream of time, through eight successive generations, and are allowed no pause, till we find ourselves encompassed with the waters of destruction. On this awful display of justice, the sacred historian dwells much longer than on all the events which took place during sixteen centuries before ; as long as on the whole history of man after that of his creation. Such a display of divine justice was this, that in God's conduct towards *mere* man, there never was, and we are assured there never will be, any thing equal to it, while time endures. It therefore claims our particular attention.

That this event might incontestably appear the effect of punitive justice, full warning was given. It was preceded by a denunciation of the vengeance purposed ; while at the same time an opportunity was given for repentance, during the ministry of Noah, and the exercise of divine long-suffering, for an hundred and twenty years.

When this period was elapsed, God would no longer strive with man by his word and Spirit. He proceeded to strive with him in another way, by the threatened judgment. Then all nature conspired against the impenitent rebel. God "called to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he might judge his people," by executing vengeance, in a most signal manner, on their enemies, according to the threatening previously denounced.

The destruction was such as cannot be accounted for on natural principles. It was immediately the work of God. Every thing that takes place, in respect of supreme agency, proceeds from him. But he asserts his claim to this work as of an extraordinary kind, "I, even I do bring a flood of waters upon the earth."^h He claims it as his, considered as directly counter-acting his former operation from the beginning of time. He represents it as such a deviation from his ordinary course, as shall have no parallel while "earth remaineth."^g

So remarkable was this vengeance, that it extended to the earth itself, and to its guiltless inhabitants and productions. God testified his infinite displeasure at sin, by involving all those creatures in the punishment, that had in any respect been the instruments of human guilt, or the occasions of it ; that had ministered to man's necessities, or to his unbridled appetites ; that, in a word, had been formerly subjected to his dominion. So complete was this destruction, that the whole frame of nature was unhinged. Sin had converted the earth into a moral chaos. "The

^h Gen. vi. 17.

^g Chap viii. 22.

"earth was filled with violence ; it was corrupt :"^r for "all flesh " had corrupted his way upon the earth." The professors of the true religion were blended into one mass with the ungodly world. The Supreme Judge therefore acted in such a manner, as if he meant to reduce all things to their primæval chaos ; in the execution of that awful sentence, "I will destroy them with the "earth."^r He seems as if he "were to undo the glorious work "of creation." In that work, he had "divided the waters, which "were under the firmament, from the waters which were above "it."^s Now he brings them together again. "The fountains "of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven "were opened."^t

This destruction involved the professors of the true religion, as well as the profane ; the posterity of Seth, that other seed appointed by God instead of Abel, together with the descendants of the murdering and rebellious Cain. As the Holy Spirit ceased to strive even with "the sons of God," because they *also* were *flesh*,^u under the dominion of carnality, and addicted to every wickedness ; the deserved vengeance reached them in common with others.

This judgment was as universal as it could well be, without the total destruction of the human race : and both the purpose and the promise of God prevented such an event. Only one small family was saved. The vengeance is most distinctly marked, as contrasted with the display at the same time given of remunerative justice. "The LORD said unto Noah, Come thou "and all thy house into the ark : for *thee* have I seen righteous "before me in this generation."^v The wonderful preservation of this single family shewed in the clearest manner, that the destruction of all the world besides was not the effect of blind chance ; or the work of a supreme agent, who made no distinction between the righteous and the wicked. When I speak of remunerative justice, however, it is not meant that Noah merited this deliverance by any righteousness of his own. He "found grace in the eyes of the LORD,"^w as trusting in a better righteousness :^x nay, he "found grace," by which he was enabled to make this his confidence. His salvation may be viewed as a reward. But it is no inconsiderable proof of its being a reward of grace, that it extended to his whole family, although we have too much evidence that one of them at least was a wicked person.

This punishment, dreadful as it was, seems to have been indispensably necessary. So low was the Church reduced before the deluge, that, according to human apprehension, she could not have existed for another generation. Had she not been "saved

^r Gen. vi. 12, 13.

^u Chap. vi. 3.

^x Heb. xi. 7.

^s Chap. i. 7.

^v Chap. vii. 1.

^t Chap. vii. 11.

^w Chap. vi. 8.

“by water,” she must have been swept away by the flood of iniquity. Thus, the circumstances vindicate the judgment; and shew that God could not have acted otherwise, mankind continuing in such a state, without virtually renouncing his claim to the moral government of the world.

Such a general impression did this judgment make on succeeding generations, that not only was divine justice, as manifested in this dispensation, celebrated by those who adhered to the true religion; *y* but even heathen nations retain some traditionary knowledge of it to this day.

In a word, this punishment took place, and is recorded as a lively prelude of the future judgment. As the world, “being overflowed with water, perished, the heavens and the earth, which are now,—are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men.”*z* The one prefigured the other, in the unexpectedness of the event; *a* in the final separation made between the righteous and the wicked; *b* in the immediate procuring causes of the destruction, the abuse of divine long-suffering, and the rejection of gospel-grace; in the completeness of the destruction; in the comparative paucity of those who are saved; *c* and in the means by which their salvation is accomplished.*d*

The sacred historian gives us a progressive account of the manifestation of divine justice, in the confusion of tongues at Babel; *e* in the plagues brought on Pharaoh and Abimelech, because of their conduct towards the wife of Abraham; *f* in the destruction of the cities of the plain; *g* in the punishment of Esau for his profanity; *h* in the remuneration of Jacob at the expense of the unrighteous Laban; *i* and in the judgments executed on the Egyptians because of their cruelty to the Israelites. But on these things we cannot enlarge.

Only, with respect to the destruction of the cities of the plain, the following things may be observed, for illustrating the display given of divine justice in this event. Their sin is said to have a cry,—a “cry waxen great before the face of the LORD.”*k*—This is the very metaphor used by God in addressing Cain;—“The voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me.”*l* This language is by no means exclusively appropriated to the horrid crime of murder. It is applicable to every sin, as expressive of the necessary connexion between sin and punishment. For every sin hath a voice of crimination against the sinner. Lust first cries to the sinner for gratification; and when it “bringeth forth sin,” this immediately cries to God for vengeance. Its voice

y Job xxii. 15, 16.

b Ver. 40.

c Gen. xi. 1—9.

h Chap. xxvii. 37.; Heb. xii. 16, 17.

k Chap. xviii. 20.; xix. 13.

z 2 Pet. iii. 5—7.

c Luke xviii. 8.

f Chap. xii. 17.; xx. 18.

a Matt. xxiv. 37—39.

d 1 Pet. iii. 21.

g Chap. xix. 24.

i Gen. xxxi. 42.

l Chap. iv. 10.

may not be heard by the transgressor himself, because his conscience may be seared; but it is still heard by the Supreme Judge.

Descent is here, in an improper sense, ascribed to God; "I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me."^m There can be no change of place with him who is every where present; nor can examination be necessary to the eye of omniscience. But God on this occasion appeared on earth, and represents himself as employing those means of investigation which are necessary to man; to declare that all the acts of his vengeance are in perfect conformity to justice, that he never punishes without a sufficient reason.

The account of his previous discourse with Abraham, while it beautifully illustrates his wonderful condescension, at the same time teaches us, that, whatever be the objections of carnal men to the equity of his judgment, they will be approved by all who know divine holiness. Abraham was a merciful man, and this part of his character eminently appears in his conduct on this occasion: but he could carry his intercession, in behalf of Sodom, no farther than this, that if there were ten righteous persons there, it might be spared for their sake. The holy angels, who sojourned with Lot, testified no reluctance to the fulfilment of their commission, although it was to issue in the utter destruction of these cities.ⁿ

That the justice of God might be set in the clearest light, the inhabitants of Sodom were permitted to manifest their greediness, obduracy, and violence, in working uncleanness, at the very time that the heavenly visitors came to their city. No regard to the laws of hospitality or of decency, no expostulations or reproofs, could restrain them. Parents do not conceal their wickedness from their children; but seem determined to train them up in their own abominable courses. All the men of the city, "both old and young," beset the house of Lot.^o To these abandoned wretches, even the holy angels of God are objects of temptation, and seem a lawful prey. How could "their judgment linger," or "their damnation slumber?"

The circumstances of this destruction were most awful. The punishment reserved for all the wicked was anticipated. Hell was kindled on earth, and for this end rained from heaven on these atrocious sinners. Their destruction comes from that quarter, to which alone they could look for mercy. The windows of heaven are opened a second time, and pour out, not a flood of water, but of fire.

God appears more immediately in this judgment, than in the deluge itself. In accomplishing it, one divine Person evidently co-operates with another. "The Lord rained upon Sodom, and

^m Gen. xviii. 21.

ⁿ Chap. xviii. 33. ; xix. 13.

^o Chap. xix. 4.

"upon Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from the LORD out of "heaven."^f It greatly heightens this display of indignation, when we find that he, who afterwards came to save, on this occasion appeared on earth, and in the likeness of our nature, as the destroyer.

The destruction, by means of the deluge, was gradual. But this was sudden and instantaneous. Sodom was "overthrown as in a "moment, and no hands stayed on her."^g This circumstance shews the fierceness of divine indignation ; and is a lively figure of that sudden destruction which shall come on all the ungodly, when that same LORD, who came down to visit Sodom, shall be "revealed from heaven in flaming fire."^r

So urgent are the claims of justice, that even Lot seems in danger. While he lingered, the angels laid hold of his hand, and brought him forth, and sent him without the city. JEHOVAH himself said to him, "Escape for thy life ;—escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed." For, in public visitations for sin, even "the righteous scarcely are saved."^s Lot had no proper call to take up his residence among these wicked men ; and his deliverance is represented as wholly the fruit of mercy.^t

This destruction, in fine, was meant as a striking figure of the *eternal* punishment of the wicked. Hence it is said, that these cities "are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of "eternal fire."^u As the manner in which they were punished prefigured the fire of hell ; the perpetuity of their destruction is meant as a permanent emblem of everlasting destruction, in "the "lake that burneth for ever and ever." These cities "suffer the "vengeance of eternal fire." For it is the will of God that they should never be rebuilt : and not only is the place where they once stood, covered with the Dead Sea, and to the highest degree salt, although in an inland situation, whence it is also called the Salt Sea ; but, as it still manifests the effects of burning in the extreme barrenness of the adjacent country, this burning is in some sense continued, in consequence of the sulphur, salt, and *asphaltus* or bitumen, abounding in the sea, or incorporated with the soil. Hence, a country lying under the most awful effects of divine vengeance is thus described : "The whole land is brimstone, and salt, and burning ; that it is not sown, nor beareth, "nor any grass groweth thereon ; like the overthrow of Sodom "and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath."^v

II. The justice of God has been often displayed, in the most striking light, in the remarkable *resemblance* between the *sin* and

^f Gen. xix. 24.

^g Lam. iv. 6.

^r 2 Pet. ii. 6—9.

^s 1 Pet. iv. 18.

^t Gen. xix. 16, 19.

^u Jude 7.

^v Deut. xxix. 22—24. See Wells's Geography Old Test. vol. i. p. 290—297. New Test. vol. iv. p. 81.

punishment. In the old world, iniquity had come in like a flood ; and God swept away the transgressors by a flood of waters. The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah burnt with the fire of unnatural lust ; and God destroyed them by preternatural fire. Pharaoh would not let Israel go, although God's son, his first-born ; therefore he slew the first-born of Pharaoh, and of all Egypt.^w This cruel despot commanded, that all the male children of the Israelites should be drowned ;^x and in this very manner God destroyed him and all the strength of his kingdom. Nadab and Abihu " offered strange fire before the Lord ; and there went out fire " from the Lord, and devoured them."^y Adonibezek, although a heathen, was obliged to acknowledge the strictness of divine retribution, when his thumbs and great toes were cut off : " Three-score and ten kings," said he, " having their thumbs and their " great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table : as I " have done, so God hath requited me."^z Samson did not make a covenant with his eyes, so that they proved his snare : and he was chastised by having them put out.^a As the sword of Agag, king of Amalek, " made women childless," so was his mother made " childless among women."^b Absalom's vanity as to his person seems to have been the source of his rebellion, and of his ruin.^c This vanity was especially discovered about the hair of his head ; and by this, as would seem, he was entangled in the oak, where he met his merited fate.^d

Many other instances of the same kind might be mentioned. But I hasten to observe,

III. That the *Mosaic economy* seems to have been especially designed to give the Church the deepest impressions of the *punitive justice* of God ; and to prepare her, by awful displays of severity, for receiving the doctrine of atonement by the sufferings of a divine Person. It had this effect partially on the Church of Israel. For the law generated a spirit of fear, which was occasionally discovered even by wicked men. The faith of genuine believers, however faintly, discerned the necessity of a better satisfaction than could be made by the blood of bulls or goats. But this instruction was especially meant for the New-Testament Church. Even to the prophets " it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us " they did minister the things that are now reported."^e

The law could not annul the covenant made with Abraham. It was added in subserviency to this. It was " a shadow of good " things to come." But in itself considered, and as it affected the great body of that people to whom it was given, it was the ministration of death, and of condemnation.^f

^w Exod. iv. 22, 23.

^z Judg. i. 6, 7.

^c 1 Sam. xiv. 25. ; xv. 6.

^e 1 Pet. i. 11, 12.

^x Chap. i. 22.

^a Chap. xiv. 2. ; xvi. 4.

^d 2 Chap. xiv. 26. ; xviii. 9.

^f 2 Cor. iii. 7.

^y Lev. x. 1.

^b 1 Sam. xv. 33,

1. If we consider the *matter* of the revelation made from Mount Sinai, it will appear that divine justice was eminently brought into view. There was no renovation of the covenant of works made with Adam; for the Church was under that better covenant revealed to Abraham. But there was an exhibition of the law in its covenant form, that by it might be "the knowledge of sin."^g It was revealed in all the strictness of its precept, and severity of its threatening. According to the tenor of the Mosaic dispensation, and particularly of the ceremonial law, the Israelites were still in danger of contracting defilement, and of being set apart as unclean; and in various cases, of being excluded from the camp; as a prelude of the eternal excommunication of all sinners from the favour and fellowship of God, and of his saints. By their frequent purifications, and by the offerings they had to present, in consequence of defilement, in many cases unavoidably contracted; as well as by the daily sacrifices, morning and evening, and their greater solemnities of this kind; there was a constant "remembrance of sins,"^h and therefore of their liableness to the stroke of justice. It was the will of the Supreme Lawgiver, that this should be the case, and the dispensation was framed to answer this design; that sin might be restrained among a rebellious people. By the multiplied penalties with which the law was fenced, death continually stared them in the face; so that we need not wonder, that through fear of it they should be "all their lifetime subject to bondage."

It is no inconsiderable proof of the severity of this dispensation, that, notwithstanding the multitude of sacrifices appointed for different transgressions, there were some for which no atonement was admitted. This was the case in general as to presumptuous sins. If a man sinned from ignorance, atonement might be made. "But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Because he hath despised the word of the LORD, and broken his commandment that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him."ⁱ In this sense it is said, that "every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;"^k because every stubborn disobedience, as the expression signifies, was severely punished, either immediately by the hand of God, or if there were witnesses, by the hand of man.^l The law itself knew no mercy, and admitted of no mitigation of its sentence; although the Lawgiver might grant a dispensation, as he did in the case of David, who ought to have suffered death for the crimes of adultery and murder.^m "He that sinned against Moses' law, died without mercy."ⁿ It was fit that this should be the case, that the law, under which the Isra-

^g Rom. iii. 20.

^k Heb. ii. 2.

ⁿ Heb. x. 28.

^h Heb. x. 3.

^l Deut. xvii. 6.

ⁱ Num. xv. 30, 31.

^m 2 Sam. xii. 13.

elites were, might give a just representation of the unforgiving character of the law as a broken covenant ; and of the impossibility of escaping, unless in the way of being saved from its curse.

2. Let us now attend to the *manner* in which this law was revealed. This was such, as to be evidently meant to fill the Israelites with fear of the holiness and justice of the Lawgiver ; and to teach them the impossibility of having any comfortable intercourse with him, but through a Mediator. All those circumstances are here combined, that had the most direct tendency to produce these effects. Well may it be called “ a fiery law.”^o For as it expressed the fire of his holy indignation against sin, God actually spoke the words of this law “ out of the midst of the fire.”^p The very manner of its promulgation testified that “ our God is a consuming fire.”

The Apostle, when addressing the believing Hebrews with respect to their distinguished privileges under the new dispensation, particularly enumerates most of the alarming circumstances which attended the promulgation of the law. “ Ye are not come “ to the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, “ nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound “ of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which *voice* they that “ heard, entreated that the word should not be spoken to them “ any more. For they could not endure that which was commanded. And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it “ shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart. And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and “ quake.”^q He enumerates these circumstances, to impress the reader with the deepest sense of the severity of the law ; and also to declare the manner in which God operates on the minds of men by means of it.^r

God brought his people to the foot of an high mountain, from the top of which he spoke to them. For even when he speaks to men in the voice of the law, he keeps them at an awful distance, as expressive of his “ terrible majesty.” This mountain was absolutely barren, and situated in the midst of a desert, destitute of all the means of life ; and without inhabitants, no one being present but God and the people of Israel. This is the first thing that God effects by means of the law. He brings the sinner to a sense of his guilt, of his desolate and destitute situation, as wandering in the wilderness, and shut up there ; so that there is no way of escape, no relief from any quarter, none that can interpose between him and the living God.

They came to a mountain “ that burned with fire ;” or, as the words may be read, “ to the burning fire.” The mountain “ burnt with fire unto the midst of heaven.”^s This denoted the

^o Deut. xxxiii. 2.

^p Chap. v. 22.

^q Heb. xii. 18—21.

^r See Owen on the passage.

^s Deut. iv. 11.

fire of God's jealousy, or his holy indignation against sin. Therefore it was said to Israel ; " The LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God."^t The Church explains the meaning of the symbol, when she makes this inquiry ; " Wilt thou be angry for ever ? shall thy jealousy burn like fire ?"^u This proclaimed his holiness and justice, as displayed in the punishment of sin. " A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about."^v As God, in a work of conviction, discovers to sinners their guilt, he shews them that they are exposed to the great and consuming fire of his justice.

" Blackness and darkness" are also mentioned among the awful circumstances attending this revelation. Although the fire burnt with the greatest violence, the light arising from it was overpowered by a mixture of blackness or thick clouds ; which must have rendered its appearance truly horrible. The light itself was as darkness ; and emphatically taught, that a sinner convinced of his guilt, and alarmed by a discovery of the fire of divine justice, can discern no ray of consolation there. He sees nothing but " blackness and darkness," the gloomy prelude of " the blackness of darkness for ever ;" as to all that the law, considered as a covenant, can make known.

The blackness and darkness were accompanied with " tempest ;" as in nature they are generally its forerunners. In this term the apostle seems to include the thunder, and lightening, and earthquake.^w This was a lively emblem of that storm of wrath which shall " sweep away the refuge of lies ;" and also exhibits the progress of the Spirit's operation, when acting as a Spirit of conviction. By means of this law, he raises a storm in the conscience ; for " the law worketh wrath."^x

They also heard " the sound of a trumpet." This was " exceeding loud." It " sounded long, and waxed louder and louder."^y This proclaimed the majesty of God as the Lawgiver and Judge of Israel. By means of it, they received a solemn summons to appear before him ; and to listen to the precepts and penalties of his law. In like manner, when the law is powerfully brought into the sinner's conscience, it hath to him " the sound of a trumpet." Convinced that he is a criminal, and worthy of eternal death ; he hears it as his summons to appear before the tribunal of justice ; as a presage of that " trump of God," by which he shall be summoned to his bar at the day of judgment. While under the power of the law, he can expect nothing but a sentence of eternal condemnation. When he hears this trumpet, it is to him " the alarm of war." " Shall the trumpet be blown, and the people not be afraid ?" The longer it is blown, it is still the louder. The sinner, if conscience be not lulled asleep, instead of discovering any ground of hope from the law, the longer he con-

^t Deut. iv. 24.

^w Exod. xix. 16, 18.

^u Psal. lxxix. 5.

^x Rom. iv. 16.

^v Psal. xcvi. 3.

^y Exod. xix. 16, 19.

siders it, the more he sees his danger ; and is ready to be plunged into despair.

They heard "the voice of words, which voice they that heard, "entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any "more." This was the voice of God himself, pronouncing the *words* of the ten commandments, in the hearing of all Israel. This is called "a great voice,"^z and must have been very awful ; for it "shook the earth."^a The elders came near to Moses, and said in the name of the people ; "If we hear the voice of the "LORD our God any more, then we shall die."^b This fitly represented the killing power of the law, when brought home to the conscience by the Spirit of conviction. Such was the experience of Paul : "When the commandment came,—I died."^c

"They could not endure that which was commanded." These words, according to the view of some interpreters, respect the whole law. But there is undoubtedly a special connexion stated with the injunction immediately following,—*"And if so much as "a beast touch the mount, it shall be stoned, or thrust through "with a dart."* This respected man as well as beast. But the apostle particularly mentions it in reference to the latter ; because it contained the greatest display of divine severity, and was that which especially affected the minds of the Israelites. Nor can we well imagine a more striking discovery of this severity, than that even an innocent beast must be treated as if morally guilty, if it accidentally trespassed within the bounds set round the mountain. Nor was this all. It was to be viewed as accursed ; and therefore to be stoned or shot, that no man might be defiled by touching it.^d The strictness of the precept had the same effect on the Israelites, that it has had ever since. For it has an irritating power on the lusts of men. From the very restraints that a holy and just God imposes on these, sin appears more desirable. Hence the apostle testifies ; "Sin, taking occasion by "the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence."^e

Both what was seen and heard was so terrible, that even Moses said, "I do exceedingly tremble and quake." When this revelation was so overwhelming to Moses, who had formerly heard the voice of God from the burning bush, and was so eminently distinguished by his holiness ; how could it be but dreadful to the guilty Israelites, who, destitute of faith in God, could view him only as an enemy ?

3. Let us, in the last place, attend to the *punishments* actually inflicted, according to the tenor of this law.

These were often *sudden*. Punishment followed hard after sin, to shew the necessary connexion between the one and the other.

^z Deut. v. 22.
^c Rom. vii. 9.

^a Heb. xii. 26.
^d Exod. xix. 13.

^b Deut. v. 27.
^e Rom. vii. 8.

This was especially the case, when the punishment was inflicted by the hand of God. When the Israelites lusted for flesh, God gave them their own desire. "But while their meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them."^f When they murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying, "Ye have killed the people of the Lord," he threatened to "consume them as in a moment;" and although Aaron instantly took a censer with incense, to make atonement, and "ran into the midst of the congregation," fourteen thousand and seven hundred had already perished.^g

These punishments were very *awful*. In both the instances just now referred to, God destroyed the people by a plague. On different occasions, fire was the instrument he employed; a fit instrument indeed, under the administration of that "fiery law." What could be more alarming to the whole congregation, than that two brothers, whom they had seen but a little before solemnly consecrated to the office of the priesthood, the nephews of Moses, the eldest sons of the high-priest, should be consumed by fire from JEHOVAH? The earthquake, at the giving of the law, would almost seem to express the nature of its judgments. For, afterwards, the earth opened its mouth, and swallowed up the rebellious company of Korah.

The punishments, which according to the law were inflicted by the hand of man, were in various instances attended with peculiar *solemnity*. In the case of blasphemy, all who heard it were to lay their hands on the head of the criminal.^h This denoted their solemn attestation of the truth of the charge brought against him. But it implied more. Those, who laid their hands on his head, devolved the guilt, that, in consequence of his crime, might attach to them or to the nation at large, wholly on himself; demanded the execution of the sentence appointed by God, that this iniquity might not be visited on the congregation of Israel; left the blood of the criminal on his own head, and solemnly acknowledged the justice of the punishment. This rite is evidently of the same meaning with that appointed for every man who presented an offering for his sins. As transferring his guilt to the victim, he was to lay his hands on its head.ⁱ Thus was the high-priest to do on the great day of atonement.^k This ordinance, then, with respect to a criminal, directly tended to impress the Israelites with a sense, both of the condemning, and of the defiling nature of sin; and taught them that its influence was so great, that even the sin of an individual would contaminate a whole society, unless it was expiated according to the laws given by the Supreme Judge.

The same thing appears from another institution. The criminal, adjudged to death, was to suffer *without the camp*. As it de-

^f Psal. lxxviii. 29—31.
ⁱ Chap. iv. 24, 29.

^g Num. xvi. 41—49.
^k Chap. xvi. 21.

^h Lev. xxiv. 16.

noted the exclusion of all the finally impenitent from the presence of God, it intimated that the very blood of such a person carried defilement.

In many cases, the *whole* people were to take an active hand in the execution of the sentence. All the congregation were to stone the sabbath-breaker.^l The hands of all the people were also to be on him who should entice to idolatry.^m Thus were they all solemnly to approve of the punishment ; and virtually to be witnesses against themselves, if they should ever be guilty of the crime.

The severe temporal punishments of the law extended to *saints*, equally with others. Miriam, the prophetess,ⁿ was smitten with leprosy, because she murmured against Moses.^o Neither was Moses "the man of God," nor Aaron, "the holy one of JEHOVAH," permitted to bring the Israelites into Canaan ; because they rebelled at the water of Meribah, in smiting the rock, when God had commanded that they should speak to it ; and in charging Israel, in their unhallowed wrath, with that very crime of which they were themselves at this time guilty.^p Uzzah, long afterwards, from misguided piety, laid his hand on the ark of God, when the oxen in the cart, on which it was borne, shook it by their unsteady motion. But "the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah, and God smote him there for his error," and there he died by the ark of God."^q What a damp must this have brought on the hearts of the Israelites, in the midst of their joy on account of the return of the ark ! Even the man after God's own heart was displeased. But as Uzzah was not a priest, and therefore transgressed the law when he touched the ark ;^r God in this affecting manner manifested his jealousy, and taught his people that he would be sanctified in all that drew nigh him. Thus also he reproved David and the Israelites, for suffering the ark to be drawn on a cart by beasts, when it should have been carried on staves by the Levites. The sons of Kohath themselves, though set apart for bearing the sanctuary and all the consecrated vessels, might not *touch* any holy thing, under pain of death.^s Even when God forgave his people, in as far as their sins merited eternal wrath, he "took vengeance on their inventions," by temporal judgments extending to death itself.^t

The destruction of this rebellious people was almost *universal*. All those, who came out of Egypt from twenty years old and upward, except two persons, perished in the wilderness. For "the Lord's anger was kindled in the wilderness, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the LORD was consumed."^u

^l Num. xv. 35.

^o Num. xii. 1—10.

^p Num. xviii. 3, 4.

^u Num. xxxii. 10—13.

^m Deut. xiii. 9.

^p Chap. xx. 10—12, 24.

^s Chap. iv. 15.

ⁿ Exod. xv. 20.

^q 2 Sam. vi. 7.

^t Psal. xcix. 8.

For the sin of *one*, God punished the *whole* congregation of Israel. Achan took some of the goods of Jericho ; although the city, with all that was in it, had been devoted of God. The crime was charged against the Israelites in general, and they were punished on this account. "The children of Israel committed a trespass *" in the accursed thing.—Therefore the children of Israel could " not stand before their enemies,—because they were accursed."* They fled before the men of Ai ; and God declared that he would " not be with them any more," except they destroyed the accursed person from among them.^v Some of them perhaps knew, but did not reveal, the crime of Achan. God, at any rate, would display his justice in bringing sin to light ; and by the tokens of his displeasure at the whole camp, would teach them to fear sin, as that alone which exposed them to danger ; to be diligent in searching it out ; and to be careful that others, as well as themselves, were obedient to his commandments. Thus he figuratively testified the intimate union among the members of a church ; and the necessity, not only of purging out error and corruption, when discovered, but of exercising a holy jealousy, lest it should be working in secret, because " a little leaven leaveth the whole lump." Were the Israelites accursed because of Achan ? And can any church expect God's blessing, if she is not careful to " take away the accursed thing ?" Would an angel of God be accursed, did he preach another gospel, than that which Christ hath given ;^w and can a church escape the curse, if she receive it, or " bear them which are evil ?"^x

In a word, God often displayed the terror of his justice, by involving, in the destruction brought on the transgressor, *every thing* that pertained to him. When he would testify his indignation against those who engaged in the rebellion of Korah, " the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their " houses, and all the men that appertained to Korah, and all their " goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down " alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them."^y In the case of Achan, by the express commandment of JEHOVAH, judgment was to be executed by the hand of man, in all this extent. God had said, " It shall be, that he that is taken with the " accursed thing, shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath." —And such was the punishment inflicted. " Joshua and all " Israel took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the " garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, " and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and all that he had : " —and all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with " fire."^z We intend afterwards to consider the visitation of the guilt of fathers on their children ; and therefore shall not enter on it here. But it deserves our particular regard, that the destruction extended even to things irrational and inanimate. The tents,

^v Josh. vii. 1, 4, 12.
^y Num. xvi. 32, 33.

^w Gal. i. 8. ^x Rev. ii. 2.
^z Josh. vii. 15, 24, 25.

and all the substance that was in the possession of these sinners, perished with them.^a These could not possibly be the subjects of moral guilt or pollution. But as, in this punishment, "they became a sign,"^b an ensample not to the Israelites only, but to the Church in every age, expressive of the holiness and jealousy of God; their very substance is treated as accursed, that we might hence perceive the contaminating nature of sin, and its contagious influence, as subjecting even innocent creatures to the effects of the curse. This punishment also declares the rigorous claims of divine holiness and justice; which demand the utter extinction of sin itself, and of every thing that may be a memorial of it.

We have already observed, that the Mosaic economy was designed to prepare the Church for receiving the doctrine of atonement by the sufferings of a divine Person. Such was its effect on the Israelites, obdurate as they were, that they virtually acknowledged, that sinful man can have no comfortable intercourse with the holy and just God, but through a *Mediator*. This appears from the very manner in which God spake the words of the law at first; for the Second Person, as the Mediator and Angel of the covenant, spake from Mount Sinai. But this the Israelites understood not. When, therefore, they witnessed the terrors of this law, they said to Moses, as with one voice, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die."^c God assented to this proposal, as it was his will to teach them the necessity of it;^d and to shew them that his law was "given in the hand of a Mediator." Moses describes the character of the great Prophet as corresponding with his in this very respect.^e

iv. Notwithstanding the terrors of this law, and the severe punishments inflicted under it, the most striking display that ever hath been, or possibly can be, given of the holiness and justice of God, is in the *sufferings* of our *Redeemer*. Here we are first to attend to the spotless innocence of the sufferer. "No guile was found in his lips." There was no stain of sin in his heart. From his conception to his death, he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." "Yet it pleased JEHOVAH to bruise him; he hath put him to grief." He, "who knew no sin, was made sin for us," made a sin-offering, and treated as if he had been the most atrocious sinner that ever appeared on earth.

Nor are we to view him merely as an innocent man, but as "the Holy One of God." He is "the man, the fellow of JEHOVAH of hosts:" who, as to his divine nature, was infinitely remote from suffering, as well as infinitely above the law, with re-

^a Deut. xi. 6.

^d Deut. v. 24.

^b Num. xxvi. 10.

^e Chap. xviii. 15—1.

^c Exod. xx. 19.

spect to both its precept and its curse. Yet the Father, sustaining the character of Judge, gave forth this command ; " Awake, " O sword, against my Shepherd, against the man that is my fellow ; smite the shepherd." ^f If the punishment of one perfectly innocent, as bearing the iniquities of others by imputation, exhibits, in a striking point of view, the evil and demerit of sin, the holiness and justice of God, and the indispensable necessity of a real atonement ; how much more fully does this appear when we view sin as punished in the adorable Person of the Son of God ! What an affecting thought, that it was " the Prince of life," who was killed ; " the just One," who " suffered for the unjust ;" " the Lord of glory," who was crucified !

We are further to consider the *severity* of these sufferings. As " God spared not his own Son, " but gave him up to the " death," so he spared him not as to the measure of his sufferings. The human nature was inseparably united to the divine, in one person ; yet so overwhelming was his agony, that he cried out ; " My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death ;" his strength was dried up as a potsherd ; and his heart was melted like wax. Although he received uninterrupted supplies from the Holy Spirit, without measure ; yet so unspeakable was his sense of wrath, and so hot was the indignation of God as a judge, that his holy human soul shrunk back with horror from the cup given him to drink. He had been attested from heaven as God's beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased ; yet the Father hid his face, and left the glorious Sufferer under such darkness of soul, as was but faintly figured by the preternatural darkness that covered the earth. " The pangs of hell took hold on him." His soul was made an offering for sin. He sustained infinite wrath without any abatement. If these things were done " in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry ?"

From the preceding considerations it is evident, that there is a necessary and inseparable *connexion* between *sin* and *punishment*. As this is established by the supreme Lawgiver, it flows from his nature as God. For he cannot " behold iniquity." He necessarily seeks its destruction, with all the energy of his infinite nature. Every sin is an appeal, both to his justice, and to his power : and however the sinner may flatter himself, this is the language in which God addresses him ; " Be sure your sin will find you out." ^g Sin acts as an informer against itself. As it brings this information in man's own conscience, it as certainly does so at the bar of justice. Nay, in relation to the necessary exercise of justice, sin is here, by a strong figure, represented as a messenger that pursues the sinner till it overtake him.

We perceive also, that the *law* affords *no comfort* to the sinner. It was never revealed with this design. For " what things soever

^f Zech. xiii. 7.

^g Numb. xxxii. 23.

"the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." We can neither obey its precept, nor bear its curse. What folly then is it, for man to think of being justified by a law that utters no sentence, save that of eternal condemnation !

We learn the *necessity* of a complete *atonement* for sin. This is the great doctrine taught by the law, as it was revealed from Mount Sinai. It was meant as a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ. It treated the Israelites with all severity. It applied the rod of its threatening and curse ; that they might see the necessity of fleeing from it, to Him who was revealed, although more obscurely, as the end " of the law for righteousness." By the multitude of its sacrifices, as it could never be reasonably believed that God would accept of the blood of a beast as an atonement for the sin of man, it both declared the necessity of a complete satisfaction, and directed them to look for one of this character in the sufferings of the promised Messiah. By the constant repetition of such sacrifices, their insufficiency was taught, and the necessity of one that should for ever take away sin.

The Church is now delivered from the ceremonial law. But the law, as a covenant of works, hath the same language. It testifies to the sinner that it hath nothing in reserve for him but eternal death. When it comes with power to the heart, man is convinced that except he be saved through the righteousness of a Surety, he must certainly perish.

We may perceive the *grace* of our God, in providing a remedy, and especially in doing it at such infinite expense. Many pretend to plead for the riches of grace, at the expense of denying the atonement ? " How does grace appear," do they say, " if complete satisfaction must be made for sin ? Does it not exhibit this perfection in a far more engaging light, if we view God as pardoning sin without requiring any atonement to justice ?" But this doctrine, so far from illustrating, obscures the grace of God. If a friend confers a favour on us, we esteem the favour in proportion to what it cost him. Were it consistent with the nature of God, to pardon sin without any atonement, the display of his grace would be far inferior. But when we know from his word, that he " will by no means clear the guilty," that, from his essential and necessary love of righteousness, he punishes the wicked ; we see the highest reason to admire the grace of God in the gift of his own Son as a sacrifice. This is as much grace to us, as if no atonement had been necessary ; because all the blessings of the covenant are given " without money, and without price : " and it is *commended* to us, exhibited in the most engaging point of view, because " God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son."

We learn the *impossibility* of *escaping* the stroke of divine justice, if we despise the remedy. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation? He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy.—Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God?" And all tread him under foot, who refuse to put the crown of their salvation on his head.

In fine, we perceive the necessity of *reverence* in all our Christian service. In this very way, the apostle, writing to the Hebrews, applies what he had said with respect to the terrors of the law, and the superior privileges of the gospel. "Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.ⁱ He manifested himself, in this character, under the law. The dispensation under which we live, is very different with respect to immediate temporal tokens of divine indignation. But we still serve the same God. His holiness is invariably the same, even although it is not manifested by such displays of his justice. But even these have not been wanting under the New Testament. What affecting monuments of divine displeasure were Judas Iscariot, and Ananias and Sapphira & God set them up, in the very dawn of the gospel-church, as beacons to deter us from tampering with his justice. For even *our* God is a consuming fire. Such temporal judgments are far less frequent under this dispensation. But for this we may see a sufficient reason. The eternal state is more clearly revealed: and in this the fire of divine justice will burn with far greater heat, than ever it did in temporal punishment. Therefore, saith the apostle, in the passage formerly referred to; "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, *much more* shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven."

ⁱ Heb. xii. 28, 29.

^h Acts i. 18.; v. 1—11.

^l Heb. xii. 25.

SECTION V.

On Divine Justice, in visiting the Iniquities of Fathers upon their Children.—Children punished for the sins of Parents.—Parents punished in their Children.—Iniquity visited on those especially who continue in the wicked courses of their Progenitors.—Some sins more remarkably visited on succeeding generations, than others.—This visitation extends farther than to temporal punishment.—Something in human conduct analogous to this procedure of Divine Justice.—Objections answered.

THE Justice of God, like every other perfection of his nature, is incomprehensible. We often find reason to exclaim ; “ His judgments are a great deep !—How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out !” But we need not wonder that our weak and depraved reason should be lost in the contemplation of that adorable perfection, which is employed in the punishment of sin ; as there is an extent in its evil, which we cannot comprehend.

The divine conduct, in visiting the iniquities of fathers upon their children, is one of those awful displays of justice, which it seems to be a special design of revelation to set before us in the most conspicuous light. With a sincere desire to discover “ the mind of the Spirit,” let us humbly inquire into the doctrine which the Holy Scriptures contain on this important subject.

1. It is consistent with divine justice, to punish children for the sins of their parents, although they have had no hand in these. This principle is established by a great variety of facts. For the crime of Ham, the curse was entailed on his posterity by Canaan.^m Some think that the curse extended to all the posterity of Ham, and that Canaan is particularly mentioned, because this history being immediately written for confirming the faith of the Israelites, the prophecy of Noah was to them a prelude of victory over the Canaanites, and of the possession of their land. Others suppose that Canaan was singled out by the Patriarch, under the influence of the Spirit of inspiration, as having been immediately concerned with Ham in the crime which he committed. But of this we have no evidence whatsoever. Admitting it to be consistent with justice to punish children for the iniquities of their fathers, God, in his adorable sovereignty, might entail the curse in a special manner upon one branch of the posterity of Ham. It has been said, that the curse was not “ pronounced upon Canaan for his father Ham’s transgression ;” that “ such arbitrary proceedings are contrary to all our ideas of the divine perfections ;” that “ the curse upon Canaan was properly a curse upon the Canaanites ; that God foreseeing the wicked-

^m Gen. ix. 25.

ness of this people, (which began in their father Ham, and greatly increased in this branch of his family), commissioned Noah to pronounce a curse upon them, and to devote them to the servitude and misery, which their more than common vices and iniquities would deserve ;” and that “ this account was plainly written by Moses, for the encouragement of the Israelites,”ⁿ &c.

It cannot well be doubted, that the curse especially respected the posterity of Canaan, and that it was recorded for encouraging the Israelites to obey the command of God, by entering into their land. But we certainly do violence to the language of Scripture, and ascribe the greatest impropriety of conduct to the Spirit of inspiration, if we deny that the curse upon Canaan was meant as a punishment of the crime of Ham. Such is the connexion of the history, as necessarily to imply this. “ And Ham the father of Canaan saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without.—And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew,” as would seem, by immediate revelation, “ what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan ; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.”^o We are not merely to consider the design with which this account was “ written by Moses,” but the design with which the curse was primarily pronounced by Noah under the impulse of the Spirit. And surely nothing can be more plain, than that the curse was denounced against the posterity of Ham, as the punishment of his iniquity. It seems totally incongruous to the character of “ the Spirit of revelation,” who is also the “ Spirit of wisdom,” to connect, in the language of prophecy, the punishment of the posterity of Ham with the crime of their ancestor, if there was no connexion of a judicial nature. We do not perceive the propriety of Noah’s “ pronouncing a curse” on this occasion, if it had no present effect. There is, indeed, just as much reason for supposing, that Shem and Japhet were personally excluded from the blessing, as that the curse had no immediate relation to Ham, but wholly respected his posterity.

Among the first-born in the land of Egypt, who were cut off by the destroying angel, there were doubtless many who had never sinned in their own persons. They were immediately punished for the unbelief and obduracy of their parents. The children of Achan perished with him.^p No one, who believes revelation, can doubt the account given us of the punishment of the perfidy of Saul to the Gibeonites, first on the nation, and afterwards on his posterity. Nor can it be doubted, that God approved of the severe sentence passed, at the instance of the Gibeonites, on the seven sons of Saul. For it is said, that in consequence of their execution, “ God was intreated for the land.”^q Now, there is not the

ⁿ Bishop Newton on the Prophecies, dissert. 1. ^o Gen. ix. 22, 24, 25.
^p Josh. vii. 24. ^q 2 Sam. xxi. 1—9, 14.

least evidence, that any of them concurred in the cruel conduct of their progenitor. Yet the designation of a "bloody house" is transferred to them, because "*he* slew the Gibeonites." We must believe that God acted with perfect equity in the whole of the transaction. But there is a depth in this judgment which we cannot pretend to fathom.

God hath dealt in this very manner with his own people. He subjected the child, that David had begotten in adultery, to death; and declared, that the sword should never depart from his house, because he had murdered Uriah.^r

These facts, recorded by the Spirit of God, are perfectly consonant to many doctrinal testimonies contained in Scripture on this subject. Speaking of the wicked, Job saith; "God layeth up "*his iniquity for his children.*"^s He compares it to those treasures, which men are eager to amass for their posterity. Thus Jeremiah complains, as personating the afflicted Church of God; "Our fathers have sinned and are not, and we have borne their "*iniquities.*"^t Elsewhere he considers this branch of the divine conduct as ground of adoration; "Thou—recompensest the iniquity "*of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them: the great, the mighty God, the Lord of Hosts is his "name.*"^u

Although men were to disregard the language of Scripture, their own observation would supply them with sufficient evidence of this truth. Are not children subjected to poverty and want, in consequence of the prodigality of their parents? Do they not derive from them peculiar diseases, which are the natural consequences of vice? Do they not often endure great and long-continued sufferings from such diseases? Do not these frequently issue in premature death? Now, unless it can be proved, that suffering, or even death, is in itself no punishment; it must be admitted, that children are punished, by such hereditary diseases, for the crimes of their parents, although they have had no hand in them.

God visits none in this manner, who are otherwise absolutely innocent. When treated as guilty, in being subjected to suffering in consequence of the sins of their more immediate ancestors, they are primarily viewed as transgressors in their first parents. Thus, indeed, God vindicates his justice in the imputation of Adam's first sin. While many object to this doctrine, as if it were inconsistent with the rectitude of the divine nature, that men should suffer for what was not their personal act; let them shew how, according to this reasoning, it is just with God to visit the iniquities of more immediate progenitors on their posterity; or let them both set aside the evidence of incontestable facts, and fairly deny the truth of the Sacred History in this respect, that they may appear in their real character. Alas! that there is so

much refined deism among us ; that so many profess to believe the truth of revelation, who notwithstanding discover the insincerity of their profession, by trampling on the authority of the Spirit of inspiration, when his testimony opposes their own imaginations !

11. The fathers are, according to this procedure, punished in their seed. Children are viewed as existing in their parents, long before they have actual being ; as Levi paid tithes in the loins of Abraham. In like manner, parents are viewed as existing in their children, even after they have themselves left the stage of life. This is evident from the very manner in which the blessing, or the curse, was often pronounced. Shem and Japhet were blessed in their posterity, Ham was cursed in his : for both the blessing and the curse had a special respect to succeeding generations. When Jacob received the blessing, it had also a peculiar reference to his descendants ; while Esau was justly punished by God, not only in his person, but in his posterity, because of his profaneness in selling his birthright. The blessings prophetically pronounced by Jacob, on his sons, immediately respected their offsprings. Yet the blessing of Joseph is expressed as if it had been merely personal : “ The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors ;—they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.” The same observation holds true as to the other blessings. The patriarch views the various tribes as present in the persons of their progenitors ; and the sacred historian gives us the very same representation ; “ All these are the twelve tribes of Israel : and this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them ; every one according to his blessing he blessed them.”^v Reuben is punished in the lot of the tribe which was to spring from him : “ Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel ; because thou wentest up to thy father’s bed, then defiledst thou it : he went up to my couch.” Simeon and Levi are punished in their seed. Because “ instructions of cruelty were in their habitations,” their father said ; “ I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.”^w The stain, attending the dispersion of Levi, was indeed afterwards in great measure wiped away ; as God chose this tribe to the service of the tabernacle and temple, and “ scattered them in Jacob,” as instructors of the people. But as originally expressed, it was rather a curse than a blessing ; and Levi was himself punished in the denunciation, especially as he had no intimation of the blessed issue.

This punishment is inflicted in various ways and degrees. Parents sometimes see the vengeance executed, before their own death. Thus it was with Eli. He “ honoured his sons above” God ; for when they “ made themselves vile, he restrained them

^v Gen. xlix. 26, 28.

^w Ver. 3—7.

“not :” whence he is himself charged with kicking at God’s sacrifice and offering.^x It was therefore foretold concerning his two sons ; “ In one day they shall die both of them ;” and his life was spared only that he might see the completion of this awful threatening, as a sign of the future infliction of the hereditary judgments denounced against his house. For the LORD had “ told him, that he would judge his house for ever, for the iniquity “ which he knew,” and, by giving no proper check to it, virtually approved. These judgments, although properly affecting his posterity, are all described as directed against himself ; whether inflicted during his own life, or in succeeding generations : “ I “ will perform *against Eli* all things which I have spoken concern- “ ing his house : when I begin I will also make an end.”^y

The young generation of Israel, although not like their fathers, bore their iniquity. Their sufferings, however, were especially meant for the punishment of their rebellious parents. For the children suffered, only till that generation was extinct, which had come out of Egypt. This is evident from the sentence pronounced by their God : “ As for you, your carcases, they shall fall in “ this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wil- “ derness forty years, and *bear your whoredoms*,” that is, the pun- ishment of them, “ until your carcases be wasted in the wilder- “ ness.”^z

Parents, although they see not the vengeance themselves, are sometimes punished in their seed, by seeing its certainty in the threatening. When Ahab had, by impiety and murder, got possession of the vineyard of Naboth, God sent his servant Elijah to inform him, that he would bring evil upon him, and take away his posterity, and cut off every male from his house. But, in consequence of Ahab’s humbling himself, he is informed that God would not bring the evil in his days.^a The total destruction, brought on the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, is represented as the punishment of *his* iniquity. For Baasha “ smote all “ the house of Jeroboam, he left not to Jeroboam any that breath- “ ed until he had destroyed him, according unto the saying of the “ LORD, which he spake by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite ; be- “ cause of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he “ made Israel sin.”^b

Nor is this visitation confined to the wicked. In this manner hath God often testified his displeasure with his own children. Solomon was assured that, because of his apostacy, the king- dom should be rent from his son. Although this judgment was not to be inflicted in his own days, yet as it was procured by his iniquity, it is spoken of as inflicted on himself : “ I will surely “ rend the kingdom *from thee*, and will give it to thy servant. “ Notwithstanding, in thy days I will not do it, for David thy “ father’s sake : but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son.”^c

^x 1 Sam. ii. 29 ; iii. 13. ^y Chap. iii. 12, 13.

^a 1 Kings xxi. 21 29.

^b Chap. xv. 29, 30.

^z Numb. xiv. 32, 33.

^c Chap. xi. 11, 12.

Hezekiah, after his miraculous deliverance from Sennacherib, and from a mortal disease, "rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him." When the ambassadors of the king of Babylon came to congratulate him on his recovery, he shewed them all his armour, and his treasures. This at first view might seem a blameless action; a piece of common civility to strangers, who had come from a distant country, or of respect to the sovereign who sent them. But, in judging of actions, the divine eye is especially fixed on the intention. In this respect Hezekiah failed. It is therefore said; "God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart." And it is declared, that "his heart was lifted up; therefore there was wrath upon him." Either he valued himself too much on account of the signal tokens of divine favour he had received, as if they had been merited by his righteous conduct; or trusted in his riches, as if they could have proved the means of his defence: or perhaps he offended in both respects. Whatever might be the particular ground of displeasure, God declared by the prophet Isaiah, that his sons should be carried away captive, and be "eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon." Wrath was *upon him*, although it came not in his days.^d For even the sincere repentance of the servants of God, after great transgressions, has not prevented, although it has sometimes delayed the judicial visitation. As to personal guilt and punishment, the sin of David was taken away; but not the punishment as it respected his family. God testified his displeasure with him, as he had formerly done with respect to Eli; when he swore that the iniquity of his house should "not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever."^e He hath observed this line of conduct in various instances; that he might give the strongest testimony as to the evil and demerit of sin, and his infinite and irreconcilable hatred of it, although the transgressor himself was the object of his special and unchangeable love.

It may be said perhaps, that it is easily conceivable how parents could thus be punished in their seed, when God was pleased to communicate his will by a special revelation to the individual; although he should not himself live to see the completion of the threatening: but that matters now stand on a very different footing, as no such extraordinary intimations can be expected. Let it be remembered, however, that "whatsoever was written aforetime, was written for our learning." Although, therefore, there be now no particular intimation of the divine will by the Spirit of prophecy, the threatenings and punishments, recorded in Scripture, are warnings to us of what we may justly expect, if we go on in our trespasses.

This is one of the means which God employs for maintaining his moral government: and we must admire his wisdom in the

^d 2 Chron. xxxii. 25, 26, 31.; Isa. xxxix. 7, 8. ^e 1 Sam. iii. 14.

choice of it. Such is the love which the most of parents bear to their children, that they would rather suffer in their own persons, than that they should suffer. To how many sufferings, indeed, do they cheerfully expose themselves, for their preservation and comfort ! Thus, as has been observed by the Bishop of Meaux, " God shews parents, that according to the secret order of his judgments, he continues their rewards or punishments after their death ; and holds them in submission to his laws by their dearest tie, that is, by the tie of their children."^f

III. God visits the iniquities of fathers upon their children, especially when they take the *same*, or *similar courses*. To such the commination, annexed to the second precept of the law, immediately refers : " I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that *hate me*."g When God here threatens to *visit*, the language does not simply signify to punish, *iniquity* ; but denotes punishment even after a long, or a considerable delay. Although men may suppose that he takes no notice of the sins committed against him, or that he has in effect forgotten them ; he will eventually shew that they have been accurately observed, and that he hath been treasuring up vengeance. We have already seen, that God, without any injury to his justice, may punish children for the sins of their fathers, although not chargeable with the same sins ; because he still views them as sinners. But the threatening referred to marks the more ordinary tenor of his procedure. Succeeding generations are considered as manifesting their hatred of God, by continuing in a course of iniquity. They may do it in different degrees. Sometimes, by pursuing the very same track. The Lord complains of his ancient people ; " Even from the days of your fathers, ye are gone away from mine ordinances."^h Thus the iniquity, for which God visits, is not merely that of their fathers ; but their own, because they have imitated their wicked example. At other times they become worse than their ancestors. Their sins, although of the same kind, are more aggravated. The Jews, under the Old Testament, killed the prophets : their posterity were the murderers of " the holy and just One." Often, the children do not actually commit the same crime, but others of a similar nature which discover the same spirit. Or, they testify their approbation of the deeds of their fathers, by justifying even while they do not imitate, their conduct. " This their way is their folly ; yet their posterity approve their sayings."ⁱ Perhaps their language is ; " Wherefore hath the Lord pronounced all this great evil against us ? or what is our iniquity ?"^k But posterity may be subjected to the punishment of the sins of their progenitors, although they do not

^f Bossuet's Universal Hist. Vol. i. Part 2. Sect. 4.

^g Exod. xx. 5.

^h Mal. iii. 7.

ⁱ Psal. xlix. 13.

^k Jer. xvi. 10.

practically imitate them, nor justify their conduct. The jealous God views them as approving, if they do not acknowledge, expressly condemn and mourn over, the iniquities of their fathers. Hence he addresses his Church in this manner ; “ Have ye forgotten the wickedness of your fathers, and the wickedness of the kings of Judah, and the wickedness of their wives, and your own wickedness, and the wickedness of your wives ?— They are not humbled, neither have they feared, nor walked in my law, nor in my statutes that I set before you, and before your fathers. Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will set my face against you for evil, and to cut off all Judah.”

In the addition to the precept, this visitation is mentioned, as extending “ unto the third and fourth generation.” But we are not to view this as an absolute limitation ; or to conclude, that God restricts the punishment of the sins of ancestors to any one particular generation. The contrary appears from the indefinite manner in which the specification is made. This punishment extends sometimes to the third, and sometimes to the fourth generation. In other instances, it is carried farther. When the Jews crucified the Lord of glory, they cried out, “ His blood be upon us, and on our children :” and this awful curse hath been entailed on their posterity for more than seventeen centuries, or nearly sixty generations. All this time, they have not only been “ shut up in unbelief,” but cast over the hedge of the vineyard, and set up to all nations as “ an astonishment, a hissing, and a curse.” The quarrel at times is not prosecuted even to the fourth generation.

This specification seems to be made, however, that the threatening might have a keener edge to the heart of a parent. As many live to see the third and fourth generation of their own descendants, it signifies that even the blessing of “ seeing their children’s children,”^m shall to them be converted into a curse ; as they shall be preserved in life, only to see their own sin in the punishment of their beloved offspring. In this sense is the language of Job, concerning the wicked man, verified ; “ God layeth up his iniquity for his children : he rewardeth him, and he shall know it. His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty.”ⁿ

This limitation also marks the remarkable difference between the exercise of judgment and of mercy, in the divine procedure ; and shows how much “ mercy rejoiceth over judgment.” For a promise is added, as a blessed counterpart to the threatening, as a gracious encouragement to children to cleave to the God of their fathers :—“ And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.” But while the

l Jer. xliv. 9—11.

m Psal. cxxviii. 6.

n Job xxi. 19, 20.

threatening flows from justice, the promise is wholly the fruit of grace.

Whereas the visitation is continued, in many instances, to the third or fourth generation ; in others, it is delayed from one generation to another, to a third, or a fourth. The arch-rebel seems to pass with impunity ; and the vengeance primarily, and, as might seem, chiefly merited by him, overtakes his posterity.— This must often be principally ascribed to divine sovereignty. In other cases, a particular reason is assigned for this procedure. Ahab “ sold himself to work evil in the sight of the “ LORD.” Yet because he “ humbled himself,” in consequence of the threatening, although a stranger to true repentance, God would not bring the evil in his days, but delayed it till those of his son.^o In the second generation also, God punished the iniquity of Baasha king of Israel. Then Zimri, according to the prediction of Jehu the prophet, destroyed all the house of Baasha, “ for all the sins of Baasha, and the sins of Elah his son.”^p He visited the iniquities of two generations at once. His vengeance against Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, “ who made Israel “ to sin,” was in like manner delayed till the second generation.^q A longer respite was given to the family of Jehu. “ The LORD “ said unto him, Because thou hast done well, in executing that “ which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of “ Ahab according to all that was in mine heart, thy children of “ the fourth generation shall sit upon the throne of Israel.” And the truth of the prediction was manifested by the event.^r But it deserves our attention, that, although he had externally done all that was in God’s heart as to the vengeance denounced against the house of Ahab, on which account his posterity were so long preserved on the throne ; yet as he acted in this matter without any upright intentions, and as he turned aside to the sins of Jeroboam, all this seems to be only the exercise of divine forbearance. He fulfilled God’s purpose ; yet because he acted from sinister motives, God views him as the murderer of his master, and long afterwards “ maketh inquisition for blood.” His great-grandson is murdered by Shallum the son of Jabesh ; and thus, according to the prophecy of Hosea, God “ avenged the “ blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu.”^s Baasha had in like manner been the instrument of the predicted vengeance against the house of Jeroboam ; yet God denounces vengeance against Baasha and his house, “ because he killed” Nadab the son of Jeroboam.^t Here let us admire the wisdom, the holiness and the justice of our God ; who employs wicked men to accomplish his purposes of vengeance ; while the sin is wholly their own, and exposes them to severe punishment, which sooner or later shall certainly be inflicted.

^o 1 Kings xxi. 19, 29.

^q Chap. xiv. 10. ; xv. 27—29.

^s Hos. i. 4.

^p Chap. xvi. 7, 9, 13.

^r 2 Kings x. 30. ; xv. 12.

^t 1 Kings xvi. 7.

Nebuchadnezzar, although accomplishing the divine purpose against Judah, subjected himself to "the vengeance of the LORD, the vengeance of his temple." Therefore it was threatened; "I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity.^u But as God meant to try his people for seventy years in Babylon, the vengeance was delayed till the reign of Belshazzar his grandson. Therefore it was predicted; "All nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come; and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him."^v They served themselves of him in the punishment of his posterity. Hence also is the command given; "Prepare slaughter for his children, for the iniquity of their fathers."^w To shew in the clearest point of view, that this punishment was peculiarly "the vengeance of his temple," God so ordered it in his providence, and he hath left it on record in the Sacred History, that it was on that very night in which the holy vessels of the house of God were profaned, that Babylon was taken and Belshazzar slain.^x

Thus also it appears, that while slaughter was prepared for Belshazzar "for the iniquity of his fathers," this iniquity was viewed by divine justice as his own. He formally entered into fellowship with his grandfather, by his impiety in defiling the sacred vessels of the temple; and set the seal of his approbation to all that had been done against the house and heritage of JEHOVAH. God bore with him till he thus served himself heir to the guilt of Nebuchadnezzar; but then the exercise of divine long-suffering was at an end. It has been supposed that this was the feast, annually celebrated by the Babylonians, in honour of their great god Bel. They at any rate mingled with it their false religion. For while they drank out of the holy vessels of the temple of JEHOVAH, they "praised the gods of silver and gold."^y It seems most probable, that these vessels had been brought forth as a trophy of victory over the true God; and that Belshazzar praised his false deities, by ascribing to them a superiority of power over that God who had been worshipped at Jerusalem, the spoils of whose temple now adorned the table of his riot.

It may seem surprising, that the individual "who hath made the earth to tremble,—who hath made the world as a wilderness, —and hath not opened the house of his prisoners," that he who hath been the original and principal cause of the controversy, should go to his grave in peace; and that the vengeance should be executed on his posterity of the third, fourth or fifth generation, although perhaps they have never sold themselves to work wickedness like him. This is indeed one of the deep things of God. But there are various considerations which tend to remove the difficulty.

^u Jer. xxv. 12.^w Isa. xiv. 21.

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^v Chap. xxvii. 7.^x Dan. v. 1—4, 28, 30.

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^y Ver. v. 3, 4.

When God spares the original culprit, he hath generally some great *providential end* to serve by this conduct. When he spared Jeroboam, it was for judgment to the house of David. He suffered Nebuchadnezzar to die in peace, for accomplishing his purpose in the establishment of the first great monarchy, as well as for prolonging the visitation on rebellious Judah, and the other nations of the earth. Neither of these designs could have been fulfilled, had the vengeance come in its full extent in his days. It must also be remembered, that this proud and ambitious monarch was personally visited for seven years by an unexampled judgment. He who had "made the world as a wilderness," had "a beast's heart given unto him.—was driven from men, and "had his dwelling with the beasts of the field."^z

Although the sins of posterity should not equal those of their ancestors in atrocity, there is notwithstanding a constant *accumulation* of guilt. Sin is represented as a debt; and the original debt is greatly increased by the additions made in successive generations. The men of this world are well acquainted with the doctrine of accumulation, as it respects earthly property. But alas! they pay no regard to the accumulation of guilt; which exposes them to that awful retribution threatened by the Judge of the universe: "Behold, it is written before me, I will not keep silence but will recompence, even recompence, into their bosom, "your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, "saith the LORD:—therefore will I measure their former work "into their bosom."^a To this purpose Moses said to the young generation, who had been born in the wilderness; "Behold, ye "are risen up in your fathers' stead, an increase of sinful men, to "augment yet the fierce anger of the LORD toward Israel."^b

As this guilt is increased, it is also *aggravated*. If those, who walk in the evil ways of their fathers, are favoured with a revelation of the divine will, their guilt is aggravated from the very circumstance of their having these iniquities before their eyes. For these, in their connexion with the threatenings of God's word, ought to have been viewed as beacons, set up in providence, for deterring them from a similar course. Therefore, the evil example of ancestors, who enjoyed the outward means of grace, so far from being admitted as an extenuation of the guilt of their posterity, is still represented by God as enhancing it. "Thus saith "the LORD, For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will "not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have despised the law of the LORD,—and their lies caused them to err, "after the which their fathers have walked."^c The guilt of Babylon was greatly increased by the residence of God's people in that land. "We would have healed Babylon," say they, "but "she is not healed."^d

^z Dan. iv. 16, 22, 33.

^c Amos ii. 4.

^a Isa. lxxv. 6, 7.

^d Jer. li. 9.

^b Num. xxxii. 14.

It is a still higher aggravation, if God has not only threatened, but *executed* his *vengeance* on their fathers, for these very sins. Of this the history of Israel affords ample illustration. Thus God speaks by Ezekiel: "Are ye polluted after the manner of your fathers? And commit ye whoredoms after their abominations?—Like as I pleaded with your fathers,—so will I plead with you."^e There is no evidence, that Belshazzar had personally committed so many crimes as his ancestor Nebuchadnezzar. But in this respect was his guilt peculiarly aggravated. Although he *knew* the awful judgment that had been brought on Nebuchadnezzar, his heart, so far from being *humbled*, was so *lifted up*, that he presumed to profane the holy vessels of the temple of JEHOVAH. The vengeance, therefore, could be no longer delayed. The life of the king, and the existence of the kingdom, terminated together.^f

When God has given no practical testimonies of his displeasure with wicked predecessors, his very *forbearance* proves an occasion of the aggravation of the guilt of posterity, if they either continue in their wicked courses, or are not humbled on account of them. All who "despise the riches of his—*forbearance*" and "long-suffering,—treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath."^g This conduct on the part of the Israelites, is frequently exhibited as a special aggravation of their guilt, and as both hastening and augmenting their punishment. After a particular enumeration of the mercies manifested towards them, it is added; "Yet they turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers. When God heard this he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel."^h

The case is similar, when long-suffering hath been mingled with all the tokens of divine displeasure; or when God hath "often turned his anger away, and hath not stirred up all his wrath." Thus Nehemiah confesses the guilt of his people: "Our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments.—Yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness.—Moreover, thou gavest them kingdoms and nations.—Nevertheless, they were disobedient and rebelled against thee.—Therefore thou deliveredst them into the hand of their enemies. Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy Spirit in thy prophets; yet would they not give ear; therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands."ⁱ

IV. There are *some sins* which God more remarkably visits on succeeding generations, than others. The first we shall mention is idolatry, or the corruption of his worship and ordinances. Hence we find this threatening appended to the second com-

^e Ezek. xx. 30, 36.

^f Dan. v. 19—23, 28, 30.

^g Rom. ii. 4, 5.

^h Psal. lxxviii. 57—59.

ⁱ Neh. ix. 16—27, 30. See also Ezek. xx. 1—36.

mandment. God is especially jealous as to his service. He prosecuted his quarrel with the seed of Jeroboam, because in this respect he had "made Israel to sin." Whatever excuses men may offer for apostacy from the true worship of God, he accounts all idolaters *haters* of himself; for this is the character given to those who break this precept.

As this threatening illustrates the heinous guilt of idolatry, we may see the propriety of connecting it with the second precept in another respect; because children are so very apt to follow the example of their parents in religion. How often do men give this as an apology for a false, or what they acknowledge to be a corrupt religion; how often is it employed as an argument even against impartial examination, that their religion is the same which their fathers professed?

Breach of covenant is another sin which God especially punishes in the same manner. Zedekiah had entered into a covenant, to give his subjects that liberty which God had appointed in the law. But he and his princes afterwards transgressed it. Wherefore the Lord denounced vengeance against them;—"Zedekiah king of Judah and his princes will I give into the hand of their enemies." This vengeance was executed in a most affecting manner. The king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and then he put them out; *k* as if God would suffer this wretched parent to retain his sight, only till he had witnessed the merciless extermination of the fruit of his body.

The shedding of the blood of his saints is a sin that God remarkably visits on succeeding generations. All innocent blood defiles the land in which it is shed. If men should make no inquisition for it, God will. It hath been a thousand times remarked, even by those who know not the truth, that the providence of God is more signally seen in the discovery and punishment of murder, than with respect to any other crime. The barbarous heathens of Melita, when they saw the viper fasten on Paul's hand, had only one opinion about the matter; and this they formed without hesitation. "No doubt," said they, "this man is a murderer, whom though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live." Nor is it surprising that God should especially prosecute this sin. We find the reason of this, in the law given to all the sons of Noah, on the restoration of the world. He adjudges to death every murderer, because "in the image of God made he man."^m This crime is an attack on God himself, in his only visible image in this lower world. But when it is committed in the way of persecution, it is still more heinous in his sight. There is a double attack on the Majesty of heaven; on his image, as it still imperfectly remains, in consequence of the first creation, and also as restored by the second. Nay, when men are "persecuted for righteousness' sake," God knows that

k Jer. xxxiv. 21.; xxxix. 6, 7. *l* Acts xxviii. 4. *m* Gen. ix. 6.

his image in the new creation, is the very ground of the persecution.

Need we wonder, then, that "the death of his saints" should be especially "precious in his sight?" Their immediate persecutors may seem to escape; but the guilt descends to succeeding generations. God deals with persons, families, societies, and nations, in a way peculiar to himself. There is a certain appointed measure of iniquity that he allows them to fill up, before he calls them to account. When he promised Canaan to Abraham and his seed, he did not give them immediate possession. They had to wait for about four hundred years for the accomplishment of the promise; because "the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full."ⁿ Thus God deals with wicked families. When they have persecuted his servants, he fulfils his threatening; "They shall judge thee,—after the manner of women that shed blood; because—blood is in their hands.—They shall slay their sons and their daughters."^o In this manner did God visit the blood of his servant Naboth on the house of Ahab. For the crime of this wicked prince was not simply murder, but persecution. He shed the blood of Naboth, for his strict adherence to the divine precept, in refusing to sell, or to exchange his inheritance.^p The vengeance overtook Jehoram in the portion of Naboth, in that very field which his father had procured for himself by the murder of a righteous man.

So striking was this dispensation of providence, that it forcibly brought to the recollection of the wicked Jehu the prediction delivered by Elijah, which he repeated to his captain in these words; "Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the LORD; and I will requite thee in this plat, saith the LORD."^q Manasseh "shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another."^r This God visited on the third generation of his posterity; and not on them only, but on the whole nation. For as they had suffered themselves to be seduced by him, "to do more evil than did the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel;"^s God viewed them as having made the blood-guiltiness of Manasseh their own, because they used no proper means for the prevention or restraint of this atrocious wickedness. The Chaldeans were sent against Judah "to destroy it;" and this is the reason assigned: "Surely at the commandment of the LORD came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did; and also for the innocent blood that he shed,—which the Lord would not pardon."^t

ⁿ Gen. xv. 16.

^o Ezek. xxiii. 45—47.

^p 1 Kings xxi. 2, 3. comp. Lev. xxv. 23, 25.; Num. xxxvi. 6—9.

^q 2 Kings ix. 21, 24—26.

^r Chap. xxi. 16.

^s Chap. xxi. 9.

^t Chap. xxiii. 26.; xxiv. 3, 4. See also Jer. xv. 3, 4.

Thus did the Jews, who rejected the Son of God, "fill up the measure of their fathers," as he forewarned them: "Behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes, and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias.—Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation."^u Many of their predecessors had been severely punished for this very crime. But the punishment due to them as a nation had been still in a great measure deferred. This generation killed the *heir*, and thus explicitly set the seal of their approbation to all that their fathers had done to the *servants*.^x They murdered the great Prophet of the Church, and thus practically vindicated the conduct of their ancestors, in shedding the blood of his messengers. They killed "the just One," and brought on themselves the guilt of all the righteous blood formerly shed. God was therefore to visit them with as much severity, as if he had never before made inquisition for blood. As their guilt was accumulated from one generation to another, their punishment was to be unexampled. He would prosecute his controversy with them with as great severity as was possible, without utterly destroying them as a people. Hence the apostle Paul gives this account of their sin and punishment: They "both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; —to fill up their sins alway: for," and therefore "the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost."^y*

^u Matt. xxiii. 32, 34—36. ^x Chap. xxi. 35—41. ^y 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16.

* The observations of a very eminent writer, on the parallel passage, Luke xi. 50, 51, deserve our attention. "There is in this commination an appearance of severity beyond the rule established, Exod. xx. 5.—Here the vengeance and punishment due unto the sins of an hundred generations, is threatened to be inflicted on that which was present.—The case here is *particular*. That in the command respects the common case of all false worshippers, and their posterity; but this respects the persecution unto blood and death of the true worshippers of God. Now, though God be very much provoked with the sins of false worshippers, yet he can either bear with them, or pass over their sins with lesser punishment, or at least for a long season; but when they come to persecution, and the blood of them who worship him in spirit and in truth, in his appointed season he will not spare them; their own, and the iniquities of their predecessors, shall be avenged on them, which will be the end of the anti-christian church state, after all its present triumph.

"All those who, from the beginning of the world, suffered unto blood on the account of religion, suffered *in the cause of Christ*, for their faith in him, and confession of him; namely, as he was promised unto the Church. Unto him and his office did Abel, *by faith*, bear testimony, in the bloody sacrifice that he offered. So it is said that Moses, in his danger for killing the Egyptian, bare "the reproach of Christ," because he did it in faith of the promised seed, which was Christ. They were therefore all slain in the cause of Christ; and whereas this generation was to slay Christ himself, and did so, they did therein approve of, and justify all the blood that was shed from the foundation of the world; and made them-

A similar account is given of the guilt and visitation of Rome. In answer to the cry of "the souls of them that were slain for the word of God," during the heathen persecutions, it is said, that "they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."^z This undoubtedly respects those that were to suffer under Rome antichristian. The guilt is represented as one; so also is the vengeance. As the church of Rome hath adopted almost all the idolatries of that heathenism which preceded her, only with a change of names, whence her members are called the *Gentiles*; ^a she hath also in another respect appropriated the guilt of Rome heathen as her own, by carrying on the same accursed work of persecuting the saints. Therefore it is said; "In her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain on the earth."^b The blood of all that have been slain on the earth, that is, for the sake of religion, is ascribed to her; because the greatest part of it has been shed either by her immediate agency, by her instigation, or in consequence of adhering to her bloody principles. But perhaps the *earth* here denotes the extent of the Roman empire; as the term is most generally used in this prophecy. And indeed, there has scarcely been any blood shed within the limits of the empire, whatever has been the pretence, that may not be traced to the skirts of this harlot. Even those wars, which have not been waged expressly under the pretence of religion, have generally been owing to her detestable policy, to the influence of her principles as intoxicating the nations, or to the secret machinations of her members.

v. The punishment with which God visits children, for the iniquity of their fathers, is *not merely* of a *temporal* kind. Not to mention other considerations, this appears from the contrast stated in the threatening. Surely the mercy which God keeps for thousands is not confined to this life; and it is not natural to think that the judgment opposed to it should be limited in this manner. But God does not condemn any to eternal punishment, properly and immediately on the ground of those iniquities which their fathers have committed. The utmost we can suppose is, that as

^z Rev. vi. 9—11.

^a Chap. xi. 2.

^b Chap. xviii. 24.

selves justly liable unto the punishment due unto it. Hence our Saviour tells them,† that they, the men of that generation, slew Zechariah, who was actually slain many hundred years before.

"—When a sinful church and people have passed the utmost bounds of divine patience and forbearance, they shall fall into such *abominable crying sins* and provocations, as shall render the utmost vengeance beneath their deserts. So Josephus affirms of this generation, after they had rejected and slain the Lord Christ, that they fell into such an hell of provoking abominations, that "if the Romans had not come and destroyed them, God "would have sent fire and brimstone upon them from heaven, as he did "on Sodom."—Owen's Humble Testimony unto the Goodness and Severity of God, p. 2—4

† Mat. xxiii. 35.

the punishment of guilty parents, he withholds from their children that grace which he is under no obligation to confer on any, leaves them to the workings of their own corruptions, and thus suffers them to imitate the wicked conduct of their parents. At length the sentence of his wrath goes forth against them, as having made the sins of their fathers their own. To this purpose that man of God, Calvin, expresses his sentiments: "If the whole nature of man deserves condemnation, we are assured that destruction is prepared for those from whom God withholds his grace. They notwithstanding perish by their own iniquity, not by any unjust hatred on the part of God. Nor is there any room left for demanding why they are not aided by the saving grace of God, as well as others.—If the visitation, of which we speak, is fulfilled, when the Lord removes from the posterity of the wicked his grace, the light of his truth, and the other means of salvation; so that the children, blinded, and deserted of him, tread in the footsteps of their parents, they sustain the curse on account of paternal iniquities; but in their being subjected to temporal miseries, and at length to eternal destruction, they are thus punished by the righteous judgment of God, not for the sins of others, but for their own."^c The observations of that eminent light of our own land, Durham, merit our particular attention. They contain an answer to this question, "How doth God reach children with eternal plagues for their parents' sins? Answ. He doth it certainly, and he doth it justly: therefore the children must not only be considered as guilty, but as guilty of the sins of their parents, which we may thus conceive; 1. As to the child of a wicked parent, lying in natural corruption, God denieth and withholdeth his renewing and restraining grace which he is not obliged to confer; and the Lord in this may respect the parents' guilt justly. 2. When grace is denied, then followeth the temptation of the parents' practice; the devil stirring up to the like sin, and they furthering their children to wickedness by their example, ad vice, authority, &c. So that it cometh to pass in God's justice, that they are given up to vent their natural corruption in these ways, and so come, as it is Psal. xlix. 13, to approve their parents' sayings. 3. Upon this followeth God's casting the child, now guilty of his parent's faults, into eternal perdition with him: and that this is the meaning of the threatening, will appear by the examples of God's justice in this matter, when wicked parents have children that are not so much miserable in regard of temporal things; as they are wicked, cursed, and plagued with ungodliness. So were Cain's children, so were the children of Ham, and so were Esau's; who were all for a long time prosperous in the world, but following their father's sins, (a main part of their curse,) God afterwards visited them on them, with sad temporal judgments also."^d

^c Institut. lib. ii. cap. 8. s. 20. ^d Exposit. Ten Commandments, p. 117.

The learned Dr. Barrow, although adhering to a different system, expresses himself on this subject, in language much of the same import. He extends the visitation to spiritual, as well as temporal judgments; declaring it to be the meaning of the threatening, that on account of the sins of ancestors, God "will withdraw his free favours from" their children. "That measure of grace and indulgence," he subjoins, "which otherwise the son of such a person (had he not been a great traitor against God) might according to the general course of God's goodness have received, the which might have more effectually restrained him from sin, and consequently have prevented his guilt and his punishment, God may well (in consistence with his justice and goodness, to manifest his detestation of heinous wickedness,) withhold from him."^e

vi. The justice of this procedure is admitted, according to the received principles of *equity* among *men*. In almost all nations, it is accounted just that children should suffer for the crimes of their parents. Debts descend with property; and he who intermeddles with the property, is legally considered as serving himself heir to all the debt attached to it. Now, he who imitates, who justifies, or who does not sincerely confess and bewail the iniquity of his fathers, in like manner serves himself heir to all the debt of guilt which they have contracted towards God. Is it just in man to set so severe a stigma on treason and some other crimes deeply affecting society, as to deprive the children, although personally innocent, of both the honours and the estates enjoyed by their parents, and otherwise, legally descending to them? and shall we suppose that sin, as committed against the Judge of the universe, is of so much less importance, as to refuse to him the right of punishing it in a similar manner?

So far from quarrelling with the justice of God, should we not rather admire his long-suffering and mercy in this procedure? Often he delays punishment from one generation to another, giving time for consideration and repentance. If "the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil, because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily," the blame is wholly their own, not God's. The riches of his goodness should produce an effect directly contrary; for it "leads to repentance."

It would seem, that at times God punishes the religious children of the wicked, for the sins of their parents; but eventually for their good, both for time and for eternity. For the sins of Jeroboam, God had threatened to "take away the remnant of his house, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone." When Abijah, the pious son of so wicked a father, fell sick, God would not spare his life, because of the vengeance he had denounced. But his affliction, we may be assured from the tenor of the divine

^e Exposition of the Decalogue, p. 400, 401.

conduct to all the heirs of salvation, was overruled in subserviency to his eternal good. And even an early death was to him converted into a blessing in a temporal respect ; as he was saved from the violence and ignominy that awaited all the rest of Jeroboam's seed. It was therefore foretold concerning him : " He only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel " in the house of Jeroboam." *f*

Here I shall only add, that in Scripture we have various examples of God's visiting the iniquities of one or more individuals, if not duly punished, on a whole society. This was the case as to the transgression of Achan, and of Korah. This may assist us in thinking of divine justice, as displayed in visiting the iniquities of fathers on their children. For there is an analogy between the one and the other. A society, presently existing, is viewed as if individually one, because the various members have one common centre of union, are all parts constituting one whole, and form one body in a civil or religious respect. A family or nation is also viewed as one, in its successive generations ; both because of their natural relations, parents being continued in their posterity ; and also because of their collective unity, as they still constitute the same body, notwithstanding the change of individuals.

I shall now consider some objections that have been made to this doctrine.

1. It hath been objected, that it cannot be true, because it would imply a contradiction in the language of Scripture ; especially as it is said, " The soul that sinneth, it shall die ; the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father." *g* But there is no contradiction between this and the precept. The son here meant is not a wicked person ; but one who, being come to years of discretion, disapproves and forsakes the unrighteous way of his father. For it is declared ; " When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live." *h* Now, the threatening added to the second commandment respects not righteous children, but those who, choosing and continuing in the wicked ways of their fathers, plainly declare that they are " haters of God : " and, as has been seen, although others have been punished, this is not the ordinary tenor of providential dispensations.

It must also be observed, that here a reply is made to the unjust and insolent cavils of an obdurate people. They presumptuously alleged, that God's ways were not equal. Asserting their own innocence, they pretended, that all the punishment brought on them as a nation, especially in their captivity, was for the iniquities of their fathers. Hence it became a proverb with them,

f 1 Kings xiv. 1, 10—13.

g Ezek. xviii. 20.

h Lev. 19.

"The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge."ⁱ To illustrate the justice of his procedure, God informs them, that he should proportion their punishment to their personal crimes. Here, then, God does not deny his right to visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children; but declares, that in dealing with this people, for some time at least, he was willing to proceed with them, as if such a threatening had never been made. He does not tell what he might do, in strict justice; but what he would do in fact, to silence their charges of injustice. This is not the promulgation of a standing law, but of a temporary dispensation for a particular reason. It is an answer to the presumptuous query of the Jews, "Doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father?"^k This answer at the same time seems to intimate, that although, in their present punishment, God had "recompensed into their bosoms their iniquities, and the iniquities of their fathers together," yet as far as adults at least were concerned, they suffered no more than they would have done according to the demerit of their own crimes. They thought they were themselves innocent; but they had made the iniquities of their fathers their own, by treading in their steps.

2. It has been asserted, that this kind of punishment was peculiar to the old dispensation, and that it is abolished under the new. It has been said by one learned writer, that "this punishment was only to supply the want of a future state;" and that this "is evident from hence, that towards the conclusion of this extraordinary economy, when God, by the later prophets, reveals his purpose of giving them a new dispensation, in which a future state of reward and punishment was to be brought to light, it is then declared in the most express manner, that he will abrogate the law of punishing children for the crimes of their parents. Jeremiah, speaking of this new dispensation, says: In those days, they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge: but every one shall die for his own iniquity, every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge. Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel.—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers,"^l &c. The author referred to also quotes that passage from Ezekiel, which we have already considered.

This ingenious writer has indeed strained every nerve, in order to shew that there was no revelation of a future state under the Mosaic dispensation. But on this point, suffice it to say, that all the learning he has displayed is but a mere waste of words, as long as we have the reasoning of Christ with the Sadducees, in proof of the doctrine of a resurrection, from the language of God to Moses.^m While the foundation of his system is false, it is impossible that the superstructure should be solid.

^k Ezek. xviii. 2, 25, 29.
tion, vol. iv. p. 327, &c.

ⁱ Ver. 19. ^l Warburton's Divine Legation.
^m Luke xx. 37, 38.

That these words, "The days come,—that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel," refer to the New Testament, there is no ground to doubt; because they are thus applied by an inspired apostle. But there is not the same evidence as to the words preceding.^l All that certainly appears is, that they immediately refer to the days succeeding the captivity, and the restoration of the Jews to their own land; when they should not complain, as formerly, that they suffered for the iniquity of their fathers, because a great portion of the deserved punishment should be inflicted on them in the furnace of Babylon. There is no reference in the eighteenth chapter of Ezekiel to the gospel dispensation. There is nothing that carries forward the declaration, on which the objection is founded, to the New Testament. God evidently speaks of his conduct towards the very same people, who had accused him of injustice. He speaks of it as what should take place, not in any future age, but from that day forward: "As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion *any more* to use this proverb in Israel."^m

It must be acknowledged, however, that the passage in Jeremiah has been understood, by some of the warmest friends of the doctrines of the gospel, as respecting New-Testament times, and as denoting the greater mildness of this dispensation. According to the general tenor of the Mosaic economy, indeed, God acted with far more severity. "Every transgression received a just recompence of reward." This threatening, among others, was executed with more rigour and frequency; and the tokens of divine displeasure were of a more sensible and striking kind. As temporal rewards were more suitable to the character of the dispensation, so were temporal punishments; when the eternal state was more obscurely revealed, and to be discerned especially through a multitude of shadows. But although the threatening is not executed with the same severity, it is not therefore abolished: although the punishment is not so striking to the senses, under the New Testament, it will not follow that it was therefore peculiar to the Old. Even admitting that this declaration, "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father," refers to the New Testament, it will not follow, that the threatening affixed to the second commandment is abrogated. For with equal propriety, according to this rigid mode of interpretation, it might be inferred, that under this new dispensation no man's *own* sins shall be imputed to him: because it follows, "I will remember their sin no more."ⁿ It might be argued with considerable appearance of truth, that if both expressions refer to the New Testament, both must respect the same persons; and that these are such only as are truly forgiven of God: and therefore that it no more proves that God will not punish the iniquities of fathers on their children, than it proves that he will not punish sin at all.

^l Jer. xxxi. 29, 30.

^m Ezek. xviii. 3.

ⁿ Jer. xxxi. 34.

I shall only add, that Christ and his own prophets must certainly agree. What they say, therefore, must be understood in unison with his denunciation against the Jews, which we have already considered, that upon them should "come all the righteous blood shed on the earth." This visitation hath undoubtedly taken place during the new dispensation. And similar is the vengeance he hath denounced against Rome. Have we not seen it awfully executed in our own day? What idea can we form of the dreadful deluge of blood in a neighbouring country, but that it is the vengeance of JEHOVAH, the vengeance of his temple? If ever any people have had "blood to drink," this undoubtedly has been their portion. Had we exact registers of families, we should see, I am persuaded, the awful retributions of justice to succeeding generations, and the sins most legibly expressed in the circumstances of the punishment. This vengeance has eminently pursued the royal family. On the devoted head of an unfortunate prince, have the crimes of his fathers, and especially of that vain-glorious tyrant and cruel persecutor Louis XIV., been visited. "What," may it be said, "was he not less guilty, nay, a more amiable man, and a better prince, than the most of his predecessors?" We admit it. But such is the mysterious nature of the divine dispensation. The wicked Ahab was spared, and Jehoram suffered, who, although he wrought evil, did not do so "like his father, and like his mother." Jeroboam, that great transgressor, was suffered to die in peace; and the vengeance laid hold of his posterity, although not so infamous as he for personal iniquity. Let it be admitted, that the enemies of Louis had no right to take his life; this does not alter the character of the punishment, as proceeding from the Supreme Judge. It is perfectly consistent with his spotless holiness, to employ even "the wrath of man." He hath "created the waster to destroy." He, who raised up a Jehu against the house of Ahab, hath raised up wicked and bloodthirsty men as the instruments of his vengeance against the house of Bourbon. Louis XVI. did not shed the blood of the saints. He even manifested a spirit of toleration. But he was *not humbled* on account of that iniquity committed by his ancestors. Although he did not work evil like unto them, he "clave to the sins of Jeroboam," by retaining "the mark of the beast." He adhered to the mother of harlots, and thus became a "partaker of her plagues."

The vengeance of God hath also been eminently displayed against the clergy of France, who have, in former ages, been the great instigators and instruments of the persecution of the saints. As to them, there could not be a literal execution of the threatening. But God deals with societies as with families. As parents are perpetuated in their posterity, societies, as has already been seen, are viewed as still the same bodies, notwithstanding the

change of individuals. God views successors as adopting the sins of those who have preceded them, and subjecting themselves to the deserved punishment ; in as far as they adopt those very principles which have naturally produced such sins. Now, Popery is always the same. It is a religion that shall be overthrown, but can never be reformed. Whatever be the conduct or dispositions of individuals, the general character of her votaries is, that they "repent not of their deeds."^f

Parents, mark what a striking beacon is here set up to deter you from sin. Do you love the fruit of your body ? Shew the sincerity of this love, by hating and avoiding sin ; lest you subject your children to a judicial visitation from the righteous Judge. Are you eager to lay up treasure for them ? Take heed that it be not a treasure of wrath. If you endeavour to accumulate wealth for their behoof, by unrighteous means, you indeed leave them a wretched inheritance. Are you shocked at the cruelty of those parents who of old devoted their children to the murderous Moloch ? Tremble, lest you be found chargeable with cruelty still more fatal, as terminating in the destruction of their immortal souls.

What encouragement have you to love that gracious God, who "keepeth mercy for thousands !" Let your prayers daily reach the throne in behalf of your beloved children. Let them daily witness your holy conversation. Both may be blessed of God, as means of their eternal salvation. What comfort must it afford you, if you be instrumental in bringing them to the participation of that mercy which he extends to yourselves !

Let those, who are the children of wicked parents, avoid their evil example. Nor is this enough. The Lord requires of you, that you be humbled in his sight on account of their iniquities. He requires, that you should come to his throne with this language in your lips, as proceeding from the heart : "We have sinned with our fathers.—We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us ; for we have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God."^g

SECTION VI.

On the Destruction of the Nations of Canaan.—Preliminary observations.—This Punishment consistent with Divine Justice.—Contained a signal display of Wisdom, and even of Goodness.—Objections answered.

It has been commonly urged by Deists, as a powerful argument against the truth of the Old Testament, that it is utterly in-

^f Rev. xvi. 9, 11.

^g Psal. cvi, 6 ; Jer. iii. 25.

conceivable that God should enjoin the Israelites to exterminate the nations of Canaan. The idea, it has been said, is totally irreconcilable with divine justice, and with the other perfections of Deity. Hence it has been inferred, that God never gave any such command; and of consequence, that those writings, in which it is ascribed to him, must be a gross imposition upon mankind.

But let us attend to the primary fact. These nations were either destroyed, in part at least, by the Israelites, or they were not. It is scarcely supposable, that any will adopt the latter hypothesis. How can it otherwise be imagined, that the Israelites got possession of the country formerly belonging to the Canaanites? That the Israelites were not the first inhabitants, appears undeniable, not only from the constant acknowledgment of this people, but from various vestiges in profane history. Some of these have been formerly considered. Were it necessary, a variety of others might be produced. According to Procopius, a celebrated writer of the sixth century, many of the Girgashites, Jebusites, and other Canaanitish nations; settled at Tingis, now Tangier, in Africa. "There," he says, "nigh a large fountain, appear two pillars of white stone, having this inscription engraved on them in Phenician characters, *We are those who fled from the face of Joshua, the son of Nave, the robber.*"^r Whatever may be thought of this inscription, his testimony with respect to Canaanites settling in that part of the country, is confirmed by different writers. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo in Africa, testifies, that "if any of the boors in the neighbourhood of Hippo or Carthage was asked who he was, or of what country, he answered that he was a Canaanite."^s Eusebius also asserts that the Canaanites, who were routed by Joshua, led colonies into Africa, and settled at Tripoli.^t Even Mela the geographer who flourished in the reign of Claudius Cæsar, and who had been born in the neighborhood of Tingis, admits that the Tingitanians were Phenicians.^u This I need scarcely say, was the name by which the inhabitants of Palestine were generally known among other nations. The Greek poet Nonnus, from some authors whose works are now lost, assures us that Cadmus the Phenician made a very successful expedition into these parts of Africa. "Philistus of Syracuse, a writer of good authority, who lived above three hundred and fifty years before Christ, relates, that the first traces of Carthage, were owing to Zorus and Charchedon, two Tyrians or Phenicians, thirty years before the destruction of Troy, according to Eusebius."^v

If it be admitted that the Israelites destroyed or expelled the Canaanites, so as to get possession of the principal part of their

^r Vandalic. lib. 2.

^s Ap. Bocharti Chanaan. lib. i. c. 24.

^t Chron. lib. i.

^u Geog. lib. ii. c. 6.

^v Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. xvii. p. 220.

land ; to every candid inquirer, it will appear necessary to adopt the scriptural narrative of this conquest as the only true one. For, if this be rejected, it seems impossible to form any hypothesis on this subject that will even have the air of probability.

It cannot be supposed that the Israelites vanquished the Canaanites from their superior bravery or skill in the use of arms. For although every other nation hath discovered the greatest reluctance to renounce any portion of military glory, to which either in former or later times they could exhibit any claim, the Israelites have still ascribed their victories on this occasion to divine power. However zealous for the honour of their ancestors, they have said in all their succeeding generations ; “ We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old. How thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them ; how thou didst afflict the people and cast them out. For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them : but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them.”^w Not one of their writers, in a single instance, attempts to ingratiate himself with his nation, by employing any other language. This conduct, so directly contrary to that of every other people, nay, to the fixed principles of human nature, manifests the fullest and most impressive conviction of the truth of what they assert.

It is irrational, indeed, to suppose that the Israelites should be equal to the Canaanites in military power. The former, it is admitted on all hands, were in a state of slavery in Egypt. The Israelites themselves acknowledge, that they were afraid to encounter the Canaanites, because they were mightier than they ; that they murmured at the report of the spies who were sent to view the land ; that they refused to enter into it ; and that on this account God destroyed them in the wilderness.

No one, surely, will venture to assert, that the Israelites overpowered the Canaanites in consequence of their superiority as to numbers. An undisciplined multitude could have done little against a variety of nations so inured to war, as to have chariots of iron, and, according to the strong metaphors commonly used in the languages of the East, “ cities walled to heaven.” But so far were the Israelites from surpassing their enemies in number, that they bore no proportion to them in this respect.

It has been foolishly said, that “ we read in the books ascribed to Moses, Joshua, &c. that the Israelites came by *stealth* upon whole nations of people.”^x But nothing of this nature is said in any of these books. Nor was it possible that “ whole nations of people” could have been overcome by the Israelites in this man-

^w Psal. xliv. 1—3.

^x Age of Reason, Part II. p. 2.

ner. Had they succeeded in subduing one city or one nation by stealth, the rest would undoubtedly have taken the alarm and prepared to defend themselves.

As it thus appears that the Israelites could not be indebted for their conquest of Canaan, to superiority in military prowess, or in numbers, or to any successful stratagem ; and that they have still ascribed it to the power of God ; it follows that the account given in Scripture of this conquest cannot be reasonably rejected. We have formerly considered the preservation of the Gibeonites to a late period in the Jewish history, as a standing testimony of the truth of those wonderful facts which are recorded in the books of Moses and Joshua. Their preservation may particularly be viewed as a striking proof that the Israelites acted by the authority of God in destroying the Canaanites ; as they formed a part of one of the seven nations said to be devoted to destruction.

Before particularly entering on the consideration of the objections made to this part of the Sacred History, I shall premise a few things, which may tend to rescue this injunction from the false and invidious light in which it has been exhibited.

First, This destruction was amply *merited*. The crimes of the devoted nations were very heinous. Adultery, incest, sodomy, and bestiality prevailed among them. They not only worshipped a great multitude of strange gods, but offered human sacrifices. In the blindness and cruelty of their idolatry, they sacrificed their own children.^y Their crimes were highly aggravated. It would seem that they had rapidly corrupted themselves. So late as the period of Abraham's sojourning in Canaan, many of its inhabitants appear to have worshipped the true God. Among these we may reckon, not only Melchizedek king of Salem, but Abimelech king of Gerar.^z It is natural to think that their people adhered to the same worship. They had enjoyed many mercies. Abraham, Lot, Isaac and Jacob sojourned among them. They had the benefit of their example, instructions and reproofs. These patriarchs frequently changed their situation. This might be ordered in Providence, not merely to remind themselves that they were only pilgrims, but that the benefit already mentioned might be more extensively diffused among the inhabitants of that country. But they despised their mercy. Nor did they take warning from the awful punishment of the cities of the plain, although this punishment was inflicted for the commission of a crime common among themselves. God exercised his long-suffering towards some of these nations for more than four centuries, after they were greatly corrupted. He would not cast them out of Canaan, till their *iniquity* was full, not even to make way for the seed of Abraham.^a

Secondly, This destruction was *limited*. The Israelites had no

^y Lev. xviii. 3, 6—24.

^z Gen. xx. 4, 9.

^a Chap. xv. 16.

authority to destroy any of the heathen nations, except those seven particularly mentioned. They were to offer peace to others, and could only make them tributaries.^b The inoffensive conduct of the Israelites, indeed, to several other nations, affords a strong collateral proof that they acted under a divine command in what they did to the seven nations of Canaan. Can it be accounted for on natural principles, that they should have quietly passed by other nations, whom they could as easily have conquered, as far as natural strength was concerned, nay more easily ; nations, for whom they had no partiality ; from whom indeed they had received such provocation, as is generally reckoned a sufficient reason for hostility ; whereas the Canaanites had done them no injury whatsoever ? Were the Israelites so bloody a race ; and how did they spare the Moabites and Ammonites, who not only refused them a passage through their land,^c but hired Balaam to curse them ?^d Whence did they discover no inclination to avenge themselves on the children of Edom, although the latter would not suffer them to pass through their territories, where they offered to pay for every thing they needed ; and even came out against them in a hostile manner ?^e These circumstances are totally irreconcilable, not merely with the character given to the Israelites by the enemies of religion, but with their conduct towards the Canaanites ; unless we receive the solution given in their own scriptures, that they acted under the influence of a prohibition in the one case, and obeyed an express command in the other. No provocation could give them a warrant to injure these nations. For God had said ; “ Distress not the Moabites, “ neither contend with them in battle : for I will not give thee of “ their land for a possession. because I have given Ar unto the “ children of Lot for a possession.—Thou art to pass through “ Ar, the coast of Moab this day. And when thou comest nigh “ over against the children of Ammon, distress them not, nor “ meddle with them : for I will not give thee of the land of the “ children of Ammon any possession, because I have given it un- “ to the children of Lot for a possession.”^f They had received similar instructions with respect to Edom. The Lord said to Moses, “ Command thou the people, saying, Ye are to pass “ through the coast of your brethren the children of Esau, which “ dwell in Seir, and they shall be afraid of you : take ye good “ heed unto yourselves therefore. Meddle not with them ; for I “ will not give you of their land, no not so much as a foot-breadth, “ because I have given Mount Seir unto Esau for a possession. “ Ye shall buy meat of them for money, that ye may eat ; and “ ye shall also buy water of them for money, that ye may drink.”^g Whence the difference of their conduct to Sihon king of the Amorites ? They sent the same message to him, when on their way to Canaan, which they had sent to the kings of Moab and

^b Deut. xx. 10, 11.^c Judg. xi. 17.^d Deut. xxiii. 4.^e Num. xx. 14—21.^f Deut. ii. 9, 17—19.^g Ver. 4—6.

Edom. Sihon did nothing more than these other kings had done. He refused to suffer the Israelites to pass through his land, and came out against them to battle. He even did less than the king of Moab. He used no divinations against them. But he and all his people were destroyed. We can account for this difference no other way, than by believing that the Israelites were restrained by a divine prohibition in the one case, but not in the other.

Thirdly, This destruction was to be *gradual*. Hence Moses said to the Israelites, concerning the devoted nations; "The LORD thy God will put out those nations before thee, by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee."^h Here we observe a trait of mercy not merely to the Israelites, but to the Canaanites. Thus, an opportunity was left them to flee out of the land, if they chose. For it would seem that the threatened destruction did not necessarily imply a total extirpation of all the individuals, but might be viewed as truly accomplished with respect to all who were *driven out* of the land of promise in whatever way. In consequence of the gradual execution of the sentence, time was also left to individuals to consider the wonderful works of the true God: and it would seem, that if they repented and forsook their idolatry, they would be spared and admitted into communion with the Church, in the same manner with Rahab and her father's family.

In a word, all the cities and nations, which the Israelites destroyed, *appeared in arms* against them. Not one of them made any overtures for peace, or testified a wish for it. "There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon; all other they took in battle. For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, that they might have no favour. but that he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses."ⁱ Let us take the different parts of the narrative in connexion. They "heard how the LORD had dried up the water of the Red Sea for" the Israelites.^k how he had "dried up the waters of Jordan from before them,"^l and knew what had happened to Jericho.^m As they could not doubt the truth of these miracles, one would naturally suppose that they would have imitated the conduct of the Gibeonites, and tried at least if the same mercy would be extended to them. But so far was this from being the case, that a number of the kings of Canaan were so exasperated against the Gibeonites for accepting of peace with Israel, as to join their forces for the express purpose of destroying them. The king of Jerusalem sent to the rest, saying; "Come up unto me, and help me,

^h Deut. vii. 22.ⁱ Josh. xi. 19, 20.^k Chap. ii. 10.^l Chap. v. 1.^m Chap. x. 3.

"that we may smite Gibeon; for it hath made peace with Joshua, and with the children of Israel." ⁿ Greater obduracy, or more inveterate enmity, can hardly be conceived. Thus they were ripened for destruction. Their destruction indeed is immediately ascribed to their obduracy. The reason given for their resistance is, that "it was of the LORD to harden their hearts,—that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them;" that is, God in righteous judgment gave them up to hardness of heart, as a punishment of their former guilt, and as a preparative for a still greater punishment.

Let no one say, "If God had devoted them to destruction, they would certainly have been destroyed, whether they had hardened themselves or not. Supposing such a purpose, any application for mercy would have been unavailing." No one has a right to speak in this manner. We may safely assert the contrary. For such is the inseparable connexion between the purpose itself, and all the circumstances leading to the execution of it, that it is just as easy to suppose the failure of the purpose, as the want of one of these circumstances. It is clear from the event, that these nations could not have been destroyed, had they not hardened themselves against God and his people. For we are certain that they did thus harden themselves, before they were destroyed; and therefore we no less certainly conclude that God predetermined their destruction only in this way. When we are informed that they were given up of God to this astonishing obduracy,—that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them;" it is evident not only that their obduracy was the crowning part of their guilt, and that which immediately procured their destruction; but that he denied them favour, only as obdurate in their wickedness. Could we for a moment suppose any circumstance different from what must have been pre-ordained; we might safely infer from the language used, that they would have "had favour," had they not hardened themselves, and "come against Israel in battle." This may be illustrated from the example of the Gibeonites. They belonged to one of these nations. But they hardened not themselves so as to war against Israel; and they obtained favour. The deceitful means which they employed, and the error of Joshua and the princes in not asking counsel of God, affect not the argument. It is clear from the event, not only that God had determined that they should not be destroyed, but that he had determined that their submission should be the immediate mean of their preservation.

He, who can bring good out of evil, overruled their falsehood and the oversight of the leaders, for the accomplishment of his own purpose of mercy. The contrast which we have, in the words above quoted, between the conduct of the Gibeonites and that of the other nations, affords no inconsiderable evidence that

God, in his purpose, had no less certainly connected the preservation of the former with their submission, than the destruction of the latter with their obduracy.

1. We now proceed to vindicate the *justice* of God in the destruction of these nations. Their crimes, as we have seen, were of the deepest dye. He must be "worse than an infidel," who will deny that such crimes merit punishment. Were wicked nations suffered to escape with impunity, how could it appear that there was "a God who judged in the earth?" It is necessary that crimes which may properly be called national, should be punished in time; because men, although existing individually, have no national existence in the eternal state. The crimes of the Canaanites were not only great, but, as we have also seen, highly aggravated; and they had arrived at such a pitch of obduracy, that they paid no respect to the most astonishing miracles. Their "iniquity was full." The honour of divine justice required that their crimes should be signally punished. Their fate, accordingly, not only exhibited to the surrounding nations an awful example of the necessary connexion between sin and punishment, but still conveys to us the same important lesson. It is, at the same time, a most striking emblem of the tremendous punishment of the finally unbelieving; and awfully prefigures the justice of God in the everlasting destruction of all who refuse to ask peace of the true Joshua, who continue in arms against him. Those only who are brought to enter into a league with him, to enter into his covenant, can be delivered from this destruction.

As the justice of God demands the punishment of transgressors; from his essential *sovereignty*, he hath an unquestionable right to inflict punishment in whatever way he pleases. Many who deny the truth of revelation, admit that God maintains his moral government of the world by bringing temporal calamities on the wicked. They acknowledge that famine, pestilence and the sword, are arrows in his quiver. If it be granted that the desolations of war are the tokens of divine vengeance, and that God overrules these for the accomplishment of his purposes; it is impossible to prove that he might not actually give a commission to one people to execute the sentence of his wrath against another. Deists themselves admit that "God can, if he pleases, communicate his will to man."o If he employ the inanimate and irrational creatures in fulfilling his vengeance, it is nowise repugnant to reason to suppose that he may employ rational creatures in the same work, in conformity to their superior powers, by expressly communicating to them his will. He who causes stormy wind and noisome vapours, earthquakes and volcanoes, to "fulfil the voice of his word," hath an equal right to employ rational creatures for similar purposes. It is reasonable to suppose that he will employ such agents, when this method can be more

subservient to his designs than the operation of passive instruments. That this was the case in the instance under consideration, will appear afterwards.

Let it be observed in the mean time, that although the Scripture represents the Israelites as instruments, it still exhibits the work as God's. Thus he says to his people ; " I will destroy all " the people to whom thou shalt come."^f " The LORD thy God " shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a " mighty destruction, until they be destroyed."^g Here not only does the Supreme Judge appear, as passing sentence on a guilty people, over whom he had the most unquestionable dominion, and delivering them into the hands of another people as the executioners of his sentence ; but as supernaturally enabling them, contrary to all human grounds of expectation, to fulfil his orders. And what is there in this, repugnant either to justice or to reason ?

The circumstance of which the enemies of revelation have made the greatest handle, is that of children being involved in the common destruction. This idea, it must be acknowledged, is revolting to our feelings as men. To natural reason it may also seem irreconcilable with divine justice. But it is not really so. Every one, who denies not a Providence, must admit that God visits with death those who have never actually transgressed his law. A great part of mankind die in infancy. Now death is either a mercy or a punishment. If a mercy to children, as some pretend, because it delivers them from the evils of life ; its nature cannot be changed by the manner in which it comes. Death, as ultimately proceeding from the hand of God, must be as really a mercy, when caused by the destroying sword, as when it is the consequence of a fever or pestilence. The bulk of men, however, will consider it as a punishment. That it is so, even to infants, appears from the severe sufferings to which they are often subjected before death. Both feeling and reason protest against the absurdity of viewing this as in itself a blessing. If, then, death be a punishment, the subjects of it must be viewed by God as guilty. " Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ? " God cannot afflict the innocent. The word of revelation can alone enable us to solve this problem. Those, who consider death as a punishment, must, in order to be consistent, either deny a Providence, or accede to the testimony of Scripture, when it informs us, that " in Adam all die ; " because " all have sinned in " him " as a federal head.

The idea of God's giving a command to the Israelites to destroy the children of the Canaanites, is not more inconsistent with his justice, than that of his giving a similar command to any mortal malady. For no individual can die, without an act of the

^f Exod. xxiii. 27.

^g Deut. vii. 23.

will of that God in whom we live. Such an exit, although more repugnant to our feelings, would be attended with far less suffering than death generally is in a natural way. By involving the children, then, in a common destruction with their parents, it would appear, that God meant to give to mankind an awful display of his justice in the punishment of sin, even in those who had no actual guilt. The Israelites lived under a symbolical dispensation : and this destruction was to them a striking symbol of the evil and demerit of original sin. It conveys the same important lesson to us. And doubtless, such a general, sudden and violent excision teaches this important doctrine, in a far more affecting manner than the progressive death of individuals, according to the ordinary course of our fallen nature.

11. Not only was it consistent with the justice of God to punish these guilty nation, by employing another people as instruments ; but if we examine the subject further, it will appear that he signally displayed his *wisdom* in adopting this method.

He could not more effectually testify, to the surrounding nations, his hatred of sin ; and particularly of those heinous iniquities by which they were defiled, in common with the Canaanites. Had he employed famine or pestilence, or suffered them to be wasted in the common course of war, the nations around might have ascribed their fate merely to second causes. But when he employed another people as the instruments of his indignation, and attested their commission by unquestionable miracles, the neighbouring heathen had the fullest evidence of a divine hand. They were doubtless convinced of this, although they continued in their obduracy. They had the same opportunity of knowing the great events which had already happened, as the Gibeonites, who had “ heard the fame of the LORD God, and all that he did “ in Egypt,” as well as that he had “ commanded his servant “ Moses—to destroy all the inhabitants of the land” of Canaan.^r

In respect to the Israelites, this destruction was designed as a preventive, both of sin and of punishment. God had chosen them to be an holy people to himself. Now, we cannot conceive a more proper plan for impressing their minds with a sense of the hatefulness of sin in general, and particularly of the enormities of the Canaanites, than that of employing them as the ministers of his justice. By their obedience in this respect, the Israelites became witnesses against themselves, if they should ever transgress in a similar way. They rendered themselves quite excusable ; and practically vindicated the justice of God, should he afterwards punish them in the same manner, for imitating the wicked example of the devoted nations. The Israelites are commanded to destroy these nations, lest they should prove a *snare* to them, in respect of *sin*. Thus it is said, “ Take heed to thy-

^r Josh. ix. 9, 24.

“ self, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land
 “ whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee.
 “ But ye shall destroy their altars ;—lest thou make a covenant
 “ with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after
 “ their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee,
 “ and thou eat of his sacrifice.”^s The necessity of this destruction is also enjoined, from this consideration, that the Canaanites, if spared, would eventually prove a snare with respect to *punishment*.—This shall be illustrated afterwards.

III. This command, therefore, although at first view it may seem to bear no other character than that of awful severity, contains a display of *goodness*. We consider it merely in a partial light, unless we view it in connexion with the great and merciful design of God, in setting apart the Israelites as a peculiar people, for the preservation of divine truth, when it had perished among other nations. Both the wisdom and goodness of God required, that he should employ the most proper means for preserving this people from becoming so corrupt as to lose the testimony he had given them. Had he pleased, he could have brought the Canaanites to embrace the truth. But this was inconsistent with his great plan under the law, which was to separate one people from every other, as the depositaries of revelation. Now, had the Israelites been permitted to dwell among the heathen inhabitants of Canaan ; in consequence of the strong bias in the heart to error and wickedness, the Israelites would soon have become as gross as the Canaanites themselves. Hence the preservation of the true religion is given as the reason of the commanded destruction : “ Thou shalt utterly destroy them,—that
 “ they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they
 “ have done unto their gods : so should ye sin against the LORD
 “ your God ?”*

Thus, besides the interest that divine justice had in the destruction of this guilty people, God enjoined it on the Israelites on the ground of self-defence. They would certainly expose themselves to the loss of temporal life, by sparing the Canaanites. For in consequence of following their example, they would provoke the LORD to destroy them. Therefore he thus warned them by Moses ; “ If thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after
 “ other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against
 “ you this day, that ye shall utterly perish. As the nations
 “ which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye
 “ perish.”^t Not only should their temporal life be in danger, but the life of their souls. By forsaking the true God, and worshipping idols, they would expose themselves to eternal destruction.

Tenderness to children is a motive which has great influence on parents. In this respect, the severity of the dispensation to-

^s Exod. xxxiv. 12, 15.

* Deut. xx. 17, 18.

^t Chap. viii. 19, 20.

wards the Canaanites, as extending to their children, was undoubtedly meant for the instruction and warning of the Israelites. The sin of that people was clearly written in the nature of their punishment. From the dreadful influence of false religion, they had embued their hands in the blood of their children. They had sacrificed them to their idols ; and in righteous judgment, "the LORD hath a sacrifice,"^u in which parents and children share a common fate. Thus the Israelites were forewarned, that if they apostatized from God, they would subject, not themselves only, but their beloved offspring, to destruction. This dispensation was a practical commentary on the threatening he had pronounced by Moses, with respect to the consequence of disobedience : "The sword without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also with the man of grey-hairs."^v He uses a similar argument with his people in the days of Jeremiah : "Wherefore commit ye this great evil against your souls, to cut off from you man and woman, child and suckling out of Judah, to leave you none to remain ; in that ye provoke me unto wrath with the works of your hands, burning incense unto other gods ?"^w

I have no doubt that the destruction of these nations was commanded by God, as an antidote to a greater evil, even in a natural point of view. Had this command been obeyed, it is highly probable that it would eventually have proved a mean of preserving more lives. For even in this case it can hardly be supposed, that there would have been so great an expense of life, as there was in succeeding generations ; in the impious sacrifices of children, not by Canaanites only, but by the Israelites, imitating their example ; in the bloody wars between these nations ; and in the desolating judgments inflicted by God on his own people, because of their conformity to the heathen among whom they dwelt.

The event, indeed, illustrated both the wisdom and the goodness of God in giving this command to Israel. They disobeyed it in sparing many of the Canaanites. These proved a snare to them, and caused the continuance and propagation of the most abominable crimes, on account of which the Israelites were subjected to the most severe punishments. The true religion was never altogether lost ; but it often seemed to be nearly so. A very few years after the death of Joshua, in consequence of *dwelling among* the nations whose destruction God had commanded, the Israelites "took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods ;" so that "the anger of the LORD was hot against them."^x The Church of Israel, when, in a time of reformation, confessing her guilt and punishment, traces both to this primary act of disobedience to the command of God. "They did not destroy the nations,

^u Isa. xxxiv. 6.

^v Deut. xxxii. 25.

^w Jer. xlv. 7, 8.

^x Judg. iii. 5—8.

“ concerning whom the LORD commanded them : but were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols ; which were a snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils ; and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan : and the land was polluted with blood.—Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance. And he gave them into the hand of the heathen ; and they that hated them ruled over them.”*y*

It has been objected, that “ it is inconceivable that God should ever have given such a command to the Israelites ; as its natural tendency must have been to blunt every finer feeling in their hearts, and to render them sanguinary and cruel.”

In reply to this objection, a variety of considerations claim our attention. We are to consider the nature of that dispensation under which the Israelites lived. It was a dispensation of terror. God in his infinite wisdom adapted the dispensation to the state of society in general, and to the national character of the Israelites. The nations of the earth were universally depraved to a very high degree. The Israelites themselves were a stubborn and a rebellious people. That peculiar dispensation, which he gave them, was especially meant for the restraint of transgression. From the abounding of wickedness among the surrounding nations, from the character of the Israelites themselves, and from the comparatively small degree of light which they enjoyed, strong measures became necessary. The more gentle means employed by Providence under the gospel, when light is more generally diffused, would have been inadequate in that period. “ Life and immortality ” were not yet “ brought to light.” The evidence of an eternal state, although not entirely withheld, was comparatively obscure. Hence, rewards and punishments of a temporal nature, were the most prominent features of the dispensation of the law. It was therefore necessary, that these should be striking, in proportion to the obscurity which prevailed with respect to the eternal world. It was necessary that not only the heathen nations, but the peculiar people of God, should be deterred from sin by the most signal displays of God’s displeasure in temporal punishment. “ Even the heir,” while in a state of minority, was treated as “ a bond-servant.” There is now far less occasion for such severity ; as, besides the superior light of the gospel, God hath given us the greatest possible evidence of his hatred of sin, and displeasure on account of it, in the sufferings of his own eternal Son, as the Surety of his people.

The same objection may be brought, although on a smaller scale, against any great display of justice among men. It would

be impossible to support civil society without punishments, and in many cases without severe ones. It has been seen, that, according to Scripture, the destruction of the Canaanites was a signal act of divine justice, and that it was meant for the prevention both of sin and of punishment. It was not intended, like the execution of human laws, merely for exciting terror in the hearts of individuals, or for warning a single nation ; but as an awful example to many surrounding nations. It was an example, that, in its extent, bore some analogy to the extent of that kingdom, which "ruleth over all." This act of justice, however tremendous, was necessary. The nations of Canaan were incorrigible in their sins. When wickedness comes to a certain pitch, it seems requisite, for the maintenance of God's moral government, that he should manifest his displeasure by judgments of so remarkable a nature, as plainly to declare the hand of God to the most ignorant and indifferent. That mercy, which prevents the execution of necessary acts of justice, deserves not the name of mercy. It is in fact cruelty. For it eventually proves an encouragement to sin, not only to the individuals who are spared, but to myriads besides.

It is unfair indeed to reason merely from the supposable consequences of such a command. But if men will reason in this way, the proper question is ; Whether, upon the whole, the morals of the Israelites were more in danger of suffering from their execution of such a sentence, or from observing the impunity of the Canaanites ? This question admits of an easy answer. The objection is made to the command, from the idea of its eventually affecting one branch of morals only. But had the Canaanites been spared, the whole system of morals would have suffered. God knew that the Israelites would soon become as corrupt as the nations among whom they dwelt. From the impunity of the Canaanites, they would have had too much ground to promise themselves a similar exemption, and to regard all the threatenings of their law as mere bugbears.

It may be said, that if it was necessary, God could have destroyed the Canaanites, without employing the Israelites in this work. But thus the dispensation could not have had the same awful language, either to the Israelites, or to the heathen around. Had ordinary means been employed, the heathen might have ascribed the destruction to their own offended deities.

There is every reason to believe, that the preservation of the Canaanites would have had a far worse effect on the Israelites, even with respect to humanity, than their destruction could have. For they would soon have imitated the wicked example of these nations in its full extent. Their hearts would soon have been hardened, not only by the horrid influence of human sacrifices, but by that of unnatural lusts. These, it is well known, have a brutifying power on the mind of man, and render it callous to all

the more generous feelings of our nature. The effect of such abominable practices must necessarily have been permanent, because they would have been continued from generation to generation. But whatever effect the extermination of the Canaanites may be supposed to have had on the immediate agents, its influence could not be so durable ; because the command was limited, and the destruction of consequence only temporary.

We are still to consider the Israelites, as, in the whole of their obedience to this command, called immediately to view the authority of the Supreme Judge, who manifested his presence by a continuation of miracles. For we cannot form a right estimate concerning this command, unless we consider it in its connexion. Now, there was no room left for the exercise of their own corrupt passions. They were to act merely as the ministers of divine justice. Such is the perverseness of our nature, that the very idea of an absolute command being interposed about any thing, makes that work ungrateful which might otherwise be agreeable. That God, who infinitely well knows all the secret springs of action in the human heart, knew that the Israelites, when required to destroy the devoted nations, as an indispensable duty, would be reluctant to the work, and soon slacken in their obedience. That they did so, appears from the history. There is not the least evidence that they contracted a sanguinary disposition, in consequence of their partial execution of the divine sentence. In as far as cruelty could be viewed as a trait in their national character, it originated in their imitation of the Canaanites, and must therefore be considered rather as the consequence of sparing that people. It was only from their being "mingled among the heathen, and learning their works," that they "shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and daughters."^z

That such a command would necessarily tend to make the Israelites cruel, is an insufficient argument against its reality, because it proves too much. For, admitting that they, in the whole execution of this sentence, were bound to have their eye immediately directed to the authority of the Supreme Judge ; if their obedience tended to harden their hearts, the very observation of God's conduct in providence must have a similar influence on his rational creatures. For we see innumerable calamities brought on the human race, and extending even to those who have never sinned personally. Now, it must either be denied that these are the effects of providential operation, and of consequence that God ruleth among men ; or it must be granted that the objection under consideration is a bad one. For what difference soever may be supposed as to degree, the persuasion of God's intervention by a positive *precept*, cannot, as to its tendency with respect to us, differ essentially from the persuasion of his operation in *fact*.

^z Psal. cvi. 35, 38.

The destruction commanded is never represented as a pattern for their general conduct, but still as something peculiar and extraordinary. It is called "a terrible thing."^a They were to view the seven nations as actually accursed of God. Their very goods were accursed, and subjected those who should take possession of them to a curse.^b In the destruction of these nations, the Israelites were not called to work by themselves. They were called to be "workers with God." He claims the work of "cutting off the Canaanites."^c He did every thing that could be done to convince his people that these nations were irrecoverably devoted. He sent destroying insects before them.^d He made the walls of Jericho miraculously to fall to the ground, in consequence of the blowing of horns. He made the sun to stand still, and he "cast down great stones from heaven" on the Canaanites.^e

The Israelites, as has been formerly observed, were not permitted to view any of the other heathen nations around in the same light. They were to offer peace to them; and even although they refused it, and reduced the Israelites to take their cities by storm, they were not permitted to kill any but the grown males, that is, such as bore arms against them. For then, every man, who was able to carry arms, was a soldier, especially during a siege.

In a word, this command could not have the effect of making the Israelites cruel, because any abuse of it in this way was prevented by many precepts of a tendency directly contrary, which were bound on them by the same authority. We find no ancient laws so favourable to the interests of humanity as those of the Jews. They were to bring back their enemy's ass, if they saw him go astray, and to relieve him, if they saw him lying under his burden.^f They were forbidden to retain the pledge of a poor man for a single night.^g Nor were they to confine these acts of humanity to their own nation. They were prohibited from injuring the Edomites, Moabites and Ammonites, notwithstanding all their unkindness. They were not to "abhor an Edomite," because of their consanguinity in their common parent Isaac; nor to "abhor an Egyptian," because they were strangers in his land.^h Here there was no room left for the diabolical principle of revenge. They were even commanded to "love the strangers as themselves;"ⁱ and this character extended to all those of other nations, who resided among them, the Canaanites excepted; although they did not conform to the rites of the Jewish religion. These, and many other precepts of a similar tendency, they were bound to obey, under peril of being given up of God to such judgments as were brought by their instrumentality on the devoted nations. Nor did these threatenings fall to the ground. Saul's cruelty to

^a Exod. xxxiv. 10. ^b Josh. vii. 12, 13, 15.

^d Deut. vii. 20; Josh. xxiv. 12.

^f Exod. xxiii. 4, 5. ^g Deut. xxiv. 10—13.

ⁱ Lev. xix. 34.

^c Exod. xxiii. 23.

^e Josh. x. 10—13.

^h Chap. xxiii. 7.

the Gibeonites, after they had been received into a state of friendship with Israel, was severely punished, both on the nation, and on his own family.

One, who has lately professed to elucidate the Holy Scriptures, by a new Translation, has avowed that the only solution that can be given of the difficulty arising from the command to exterminate the Canaanites, is, "to acknowledge, fairly and openly, that "the Jewish historians, both here and in many other places, put "in the mouth of the Lord words, which he never spake ; and "assign to him views and motives which he never had."

This is indeed to cut the Gordian knot ; and, although he pretends the contrary, to unhinge the whole system of inspiration.

The objection, for removing which he reckons it necessary to make so strange a concession, is founded on a supposed inconsistency in the divine conduct, according to the account given in sacred history. "The assertion," he says, "that God, after "giving so explicit a precept, and ordering the Chanaanites to be "extirpated, that they might not become a snare to his people, should yet purposely reserve so great a number of those "same Chanaanites, to be a snare, seems to affect both his wisdom "and veracity.—If I be commanded to destroy or remove the cause "of temptation, lest I should yield to it ; and *at the same time* be "told that I can neither remove nor destroy it ; nay, that it is "purposely left to tempt me ; I must doubt of the equity or the "truth of the tale.—Could the God of truth and wisdom say to "the Israelites : "Destroy those idolatrous nations, lest they seduce you into idolatry ;" and yet purposely reserve them, to try "whether the Israelites would be seduced."—I cannot bring myself," he also says, "to believe that such an order proceeded "from the mouth of God ; perhaps not even from the mouth of "Moses. I am rather willing to suspect, that it is the fabrication of some posterior Jew, to justify the cruelties of his nation."k

It is evident that this objection especially rests on a *fallacy* in the interpretation of the word *snare*. This learned writer uses it, as if it invariably signified a *temptation* to sin, or *cause* of temptation. It would, indeed, be difficult to prove, that it is inconsistent with the perfections of God, judicially to leave some things in the way of sinners, which, he knows will, through their own depravity, prove occasions of temptation. This is what he threatens as the punishment of previous transgression. But although, as has been seen, the word *snare* sometimes denotes that which proves a temptation, it properly and principally signifies the cause of destruction ; and in all the places, where it is used in relation to the point under consideration, it has either an immediate or

an ultimate reference to the punishment of sin. The punishment, as denoted by this word, is sometimes expressly distinguished from the sin : " They shall not dwell in thy land, lest " they make thee sin against me : for if thou serve other gods, " it will surely be a snare unto thee." Here the sin, and the snare, are mentioned distinctly ; the latter, as denoting the punishment, and the former, its procuring cause. For it is undeniable, that the sin meant is that of " serving their gods ;" and this sin, it is said, " will surely be a snare," because it would certainly expose them to punishment. To the same purpose, are the following words : " Thine eye shall have no pity upon them : " neither shalt thou serve their gods ; for that will be a snare unto thee."^m It is not meant that the service of their gods could be a " cause of temptation ;" because this is pointed out as itself the sin, or compliance with the temptation, and so the cause of punishment. In the same sense the Egyptians said that Moses was a snare to them ; as being the cause of their destruction.ⁿ

Here, also, a *false* representation is given of the matter of *fact*. God did *not* command the Israelites to destroy or remove the cause of temptation, lest they should yield to it ; and *at the same time* tell them, that they could neither remove nor destroy it, but that it was purposely left to tempt them. The objector, whether intentionally or not, I will not presume to say, confounds things with respect to *time*, which are kept totally distinct in the thread of the narrative. The Israelites were not informed, that the Canaanites were to be left for their punishment, till more than sixty years after they received the command to destroy them.

There is nothing here that can in any degree militate against the *veracity* of God. The precept was delivered, on their entry into the wilderness, as pointing out their duty ; the declaration referred to was made, many years afterwards, as expressing God's displeasure with them, because of their neglect of duty, and the punishment to which, on this account, they were to be subjected.

Nor was it inconsistent with the veracity of God, to give an express command to his people, with respect to what they should do, and even *at the same time* to purpose in his own mind, that the event should be different. For the secret purpose of God was never intended as the rule of our duty. This is the very doctrine that Moses taught the Israelites, with respect to a similar judgment, that might afterwards be inflicted on them, in their being " rooted out of the land," like the nations that were before them. " The secret things belong unto the LORD our God : but " those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our " children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law."^{*}

^l Exod. xxiii. 33.
1 Sam. xviii. 21.

^m Deut. vii. 16.
^{*} Deut. xxix. 28, 29.

ⁿ Exod. x. 7. See also

The will of God's purpose is often very different from that of his precept, which is the only rule of our duty. It was the will of God's precept, inculcated on the Israelites for many centuries, and repeated in a great variety of forms, and by many messengers, that when the Messiah should appear, they should hear him in all things. This was enjoined on them under the severest penalties. Yet we are equally certain, that it was the will of his purpose, that they should crucify him. Therefore said the apostle Peter ; " Him being delivered by the *determinate counsel* and " foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands " have crucified and slain."^o

Although he actually reserved these nations for the punishment of his people, there was nothing in this inconsistent with his veracity. On the contrary, in this very manner was his veracity displayed. Whatever may be thought by selfish man, who views the divine conduct merely as it regards the creature ; God finds his honour no less concerned in verifying his threatening, than in fulfilling his promise. When he commanded the Israelites to exterminate the Canaanites, he did not tell them, indeed, that he had immutably purposed that this should not be the case. But he *at the same time* warned them of the danger of disobedience. He said ; " Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land,—lest it be for a snare in " the midst of thee."^p He expressly threatened, that this should eventually be a snare, as subjecting them to the deserved punishment ; as in a passage formerly quoted, " It will surely be a snare " unto thee."^q When, therefore, he afterwards spared these nations, it was an illustration of his veracity, in the fulfilment of the threatening.

The whole conduct ascribed to God in this matter, was not less consistent with divine *wisdom*. His judgments are so mysterious, that we cannot pretend fully to explain them. But so much is clearly made known, that Wisdom, must be " justified " of all her children." God had indeed determined, that these nations should not be totally exterminated, even before he gave the command to Israel to execute his vengeance. But he had determined this, only in a certain connexion ; as what should eventually prove the just punishment of Israel's disobedience. It is one of the modes adopted by infinite wisdom, in the ordinary course of providential dispensation, to make the punishment of the sinner to arise from his sin, or from that which hath been the occasion of it. Thus it is said ; " Thine own wickedness shall " correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee."^r We cannot conceive that sin could be punished in any way, more to the honour of divine wisdom. For as, in this manner, God manifests that, notwithstanding the atheistical suggestions of the heart,

^o Acts ii. 23.
^r Jer. ii. 19.

^p Exod. xxxiv. 12.

^q Chap. xxiii. 33.

he marks the sin ; he no less clearly shews the design of the judgment inflicted.

Referring to what has been replied to this objection, that it was because of breach of covenant that God would not henceforth drive out the nations from before the Israelites, this author further says ; “ The precept, it is confessed, was positive and absolute ; but the promise of power to fulfil it, was limited and conditional. It was not until after the Israelites had forsaken the LORD, and worshipped other gods, that the LORD would no more enable them to expel the Chanaanites.—That is to say, the LORD would not enable them to remove, or break the snare, until after they had fallen into it ; and when they have fallen into it, he reproaches them for the non-execution of his precept : and says, the snare shall remain to prove them.”^s

The inference which this writer attempts to deduce, that “ the LORD would not enable them to remove, or break the snare, *until* after they had fallen into it,” as it is evidently meant to exhibit the scriptural history in a ridiculous light, is entirely sophistical. The author throws darkness on the passage, which may thus tend to bewilder the reader, by the insertion of the particle *until*. He also recurs to his fallacy in the use of the term *snare*, employing it throughout the sentence, as if it must necessarily bear the same meaning ; whereas the snare into which “ they had fallen,” had a relation to sin, and that which was not to be broken, to punishment. The inference, indeed, is altogether false. For the LORD did still “ enable them to break the snare, *until* they fell into it ;” that is, he gave them success against the Canaanites, until they wilfully disobeyed his commandment, and apostatized to their idolatrous courses. Then, indeed, he would no longer “ enable them to remove or break the snare,” because by their sin they had brought this snare upon them, in respect of judgment. This, then, is the only conclusion that can fairly be deduced from the premises :—God would not remove the punishment, *after* they had fallen into that sin, with which it was inseparably connected, according to the threatening.

God had promised to Moses, with respect to those nations ; “ No man shall be able to stand before thee, until thou hast destroyed them.”^t But, according to the Sacred History, no breach of promise is ascribed to God. For this objector himself acknowledges, that “ the promise of power—was limited and conditional.” The accomplishment of it depended on their adherence to the worship of JEHOVAH.

This writer adds a question, for confirming this objection : “ Why was it,” that is, the snare, “ not completely removed in the days of Joshua, and of his contemporary elders, during a period of twenty-five years, when the people had not abandoned the wor-

^s Geddes's Transl. Pref. p. iii.
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^t Deut. vii. 24.

"ship of the LORD?" It might be a sufficient answer to this cavil, to say, that although God had seen meet to make trial of their fidelity to him, for the space of *twenty-five years*, before he gave them full possession of the land of promise, no one could justly have said that the trial was either long or severe; especially as he had so recently attested the religion given them, by the most astonishing miracles, continued for a longer time than this, and wrought at the expense, not merely of the nations that opposed them, but also of their gods.

But, according to the narrative, no room is left for this question. Although God had promised to cast out the nations, if his people adhered to him, he had never pledged himself to do it all at once. It was his will to call them to the exercise both of faith and patience; and in this respect, his conduct was also marked with mercy. To Moses he had said, "I will not drive them out before thee in one year, lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. By little and little I will drive them out before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land."^u

I shall only add, that, according to this writer, there is reason to suspect, that what is called the command of God to exterminate the Canaanites, "is the fabrication of some posterior Jew, to justify the cruelties of his nation." But let the Gibeonites reply to this objection. If the Israelites were so cruel, why did they spare that people more than the rest? Did they in this instance deviate from their sanguinary course, because the Gibeonites practised on them a gross imposition, not attributed to any of their neighbours? Or, did they spare them for slaves? If so, how were they satisfied with so few? Why did they prefer them collectively to any individuals of the other nations? It is impossible, indeed, to find any good reason for the preservation of this people; unless we admit, according to the scriptural narrative, that the execution of the precept was suspended in this single instance, in consideration of the oath taken, in the name of JEHOVAH, by Joshua and the princes of Israel.^v

Did the historian inform us that the Israelites were eager to enter on the possession of Canaan, and to destroy all the nations said to be devoted; did he inform us, that they actually did so, being more afraid of having such dangerous neighbours than of meeting them at once in battle; we might discern some reason for supposing that he had recourse to a pretended mandate from heaven for excusing their severity. But we are told, on the contrary, that they were very reluctant to enter into Canaan; that their leaders eagerly swallowed an imposture which prevented the execution of the sentence on one body of people; nay, that the Israelites in general did not obey the command of God in de-

^u Geddes's Transl. Pref. p. iii.
Deut. vii. 22.

^v Exod. xxiii. 29, 30. See also
Josh. ix. 15—20.

destroying these nations, although their disobedience deprived them of the possession of their lands, and exposed them to many dangers. We accordingly find the guilt of this disobedience often charged upon them by God, and confessed by themselves in succeeding generations.*w*

Had we been informed that the Gibeonites imposed on Joshua and the princes, and that they or the people disregarded the oath as contrary to an express command, and gave up the Gibeonites to the sword ; it might have been argued with some degree of plausibility, that this command was a mere pretence for the indulgence of their sanguinary dispositions. But when we learn that Joshua and the princes considered their oath as suspending the execution of the commanded destruction, and that the congregation submitted to this ; we see no ground for the charge of cruelty ; we perceive the greatest reason for crediting the history in all its circumstances. They discover that dread of a solemn oath which characterizes all conscientious persons ; and will rather dispense with a positive precept than with a moral one ; being more afraid of divine *wrath* on account of perjury, than of the consequences threatened in case of their not obeying the command to destroy the Canaanites.*x*

The history of the destruction of these nations, was " written for our admonition." It exhibits the justice, the sovereignty, and the wisdom of God, in a very striking light. It in a special manner points out to us the hatefulness of sin to a God of infinite purity ; and teaches us that we ought to hate it " with a perfect hatred !" Were God's ancient people typical of his spiritual Israel ? Their enemies were also figures of ours. God hath set before us all the good of the land of promise. He calls us to go up and inherit it. But he assures us at the same time, that we must fight our way through an host of powerful enemies. Our lusts, like the nations of Canaan, seek to keep us from that inheritance which the Lord hath given us. But he commands us to destroy them utterly, to make no covenant with them, to have no mercy upon them ; assuring us that if we spare them, they will prove a snare to us, and lead us astray to serve their gods. What are the gods which these Canaanites serve ? They serve Mammon, " this present evil world ;" Ashtaroth, the goddess of Pleasure ; Satan, " the god of this world." What is our conduct ? Like the Israelites, we obey the command of our God only in a partial way. He enjoins us to " crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts, that the body of sin may be destroyed, that henceforth we may not serve sin." He gives us Jesus as " the Captain of our salvation," and promises strength for fighting his battles. But we make little progress in this war. We often make a truce with our spiritual enemies. This is our folly and guilt. But God, in his infinite wisdom and holiness,

w Psal. cvi. 34, &c.

x Josh. ix. 20.

overrules our conduct for his own glory and our good. He leaves a remnant of the devoted nations to prove us. He "slays them not" entirely, "lest his people should forget." He "destroys them by little and little." At length, "there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts."

SECTION VII.

On Divine Sovereignty ;—in Creation ;—in the Management of the Natural World ;—in the Time appropriated to the Worship of God ;—in the Permission of the Entrance of Sin ;—in the Frame of the Covenant of Works ;—in God's Conduct towards Angels ;—in the Choice of Israel ;—in the Distinction of Nations with respect to External Means of Salvation.

To no perfection of the divine nature, do men show greater antipathy than to that of sovereignty. This not only appears by their refusing to submit to the grace of God, but by their reluctance to his precept, and their rebellion against his providence. Man strives with his Maker for the dominion, with respect to his faith, his practice, and even his lot. He will acknowledge both justice and mercy, in the divine nature ; he cannot, however, accede to the sovereignty of God in the exercise of these perfections. But sovereignty is impressed, in the most legible characters, not only on the word, but on the works of God. Wherever we turn, it meets our eye. Do we endeavour to draw a veil over this ungrateful attribute, as clearly revealed in the doctrines of revelation ? It arrests our attention in the histories. Do we attempt to throw it out of our eternal interests ? We must acknowledge its influence, however reluctantly, in every thing that concerns us for time. Do we exclude it from the affairs of men ? We see it written in the fate of angels. Do we banish it from earth ? We find it enthroned in heaven. The Psalmist, therefore, in celebrating this perfection, exhibits in one view the various parts of the universe, as harmonizing in its praise : "Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and in all deep places."y Does he, who bears the name of Christian, refuse to join in the ascription ? Let him go and learn the truth from a heathen. Let him listen to the instructions of the wiser Nebuchadnezzar : "All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing : and he doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth : and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What dost thou ?"z

y Psal. cxxxv. 6.

z Dan. iv. 35.

As the corruptions of men are most deeply engaged against the work of redemption, the greatest opposition to divine sovereignty appears in this quarter. Here it more directly opposes the pride of reason, and the pride of will. Besides, the enemies of the gospel especially aim their shafts against divine sovereignty, as displayed in our salvation. Hence are men staggered and overpowered; and perhaps proceed to deny that very perfection, the operation of which they are forced to acknowledge in almost every other of the works of God.

It may, therefore, tend to throw light on this important subject, to consider the display which is made of the sovereignty of God in *other works*, besides that of salvation, and in a variety of *circumstances*, evidently recorded in Scripture in subserviency to this.

A particular illustration of this perfection is the more necessary, because, unless we have just ideas of it, we cannot think justly with respect to any other perfection of God. How eager have earthly princes been to render themselves absolute! The richness of their revenues, the love of their subjects, or the extent of their conquests have often been viewed as no counterbalance to the want of unlimited authority. Ahab was miserable because he met with resistance from the possessor of one poor vineyard: and Jezebel, his wife, seemed to think, that his royalty did not deserve the name, if he could not gratify himself in this instance. "Dost thou now," she says, "govern the kingdom of Israel?"^a Has not many a prince cheerfully hazarded his crown for the mere possibility of enjoying absolute sway? This is the grossest arrogance in man, who is a worm. But sovereign authority is essential to the majesty of God. His will is not influenced by any cause without himself. But we are by no means to form our judgment of divine sovereignty, by comparing it with the arbitrary will of a sinful creature. For God never exercises his sovereignty without a proper end. He is entirely sovereign in the display of his perfections, and in the manner and degree in which he displays them. But his sovereignty is constantly exercised according to the rule of his perfections. It is always in entire consistency with his holiness and justice, wisdom and goodness. While sovereignty is still regulated by these perfections, it lends them a peculiar lustre. It is the royal splendour of all the other attributes of God. Suppose him to be possessed of all possible perfections, and yet to act necessarily in the display of these; it would greatly derogate from their glory. We could not, indeed, acknowledge him as the Supreme Being. By this, more than by any of his moral perfections, he is distinguished from every creature, even the most exalted. To "do *his* pleasure," is the highest honour to which any creature is advanced.^b But the Almighty displays his self-existence and independence, by

^a 1 Kings xxi. 7.

^b Psal. ciii. 21.

still doing what pleases himself. When therefore the Church testifies her assurance, "that the LORD is great, and that our "LORD is above all gods;" this is the evidence that she immediately produces, He "hath done whatsoever he pleased."^c

1. The work of *Creation*, in various respects, unfolds this attribute. He, who is Being itself, was under no necessity of nature to communicate being to any other. He is equally independent of all creatures for his blessedness, as for his being. The possession of thousands of worlds cannot in the least enrich him. The praises of myriads of men or angels can make no addition to his felicity. Why, then, did he create the universe? Just because he pleased. The sovereignty of his pleasure, as displayed in the work of creation, is inseparably connected with the work itself, as an equally cogent reason for the highest praise. "Thou "art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour, and power: "for thou hast created all things, and *for thy pleasure* they are, and were created."^d He did not create, without an end worthy of himself. He proposed the manifestation of his infinite wisdom, power and goodness. On the supposition of his engaging in this work, he could have no other end in view. But still his creating, with this very design, was the result of a sovereign act of his will. For he did not stand in need of any external manifestation of his perfections; his blessedness consisting in the eternal contemplation of these, in his own infinite mind.

Is it inquired, why God did not begin to create, till within less than six thousand years back from the present time, when it was in his power to have given a far earlier display of his perfections? Or why, when he had existed from eternity alone, he in time gave being to creatures formed for fellowship with him? It may indeed be said, that no finite nature can exist from eternity; and that, although the most remote period, which the mind of man can conceive, had been fixed on by God as the date of creation, it would not have approached nearer to eternity than did the actual era of creation. But still the principal solution is, that this was the divine pleasure.

Is it asked, Why did he extend or confine his works to six days? Why hath he formed such a certain number of creatures, and neither more nor fewer? Why hath he given being to many, for which we can discern no use? to many, the existence of which has most probably never been learned, that are hid in the abysses of the sea, and therefore cannot be the means of displaying his perfections? To these questions, and to others innumerable which might be proposed, we must still give the same answer, "The Lord hath done whatsoever he pleased,—in the seas, and "in all deep places."

Man and beast, as to the bodily part, acknowledge the same

^c Psal. cxxxv. 5, 6.

^d Rev. iv. 11.

humble origin. "God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind.—And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground."^e That same dust of which God formed man, and which he animated with a rational and immortal spirit, conformed to his own image, might, with equal propriety, had he so pleased, gone to the the formation of the vilest reptile that crawls on the earth ; and the dust of which that reptile is composed, might have constituted the corporeal part of man. But in this respect the Almighty Potter hath manifested his "power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour."^f And shall we dare to assign limits to his sovereignty ? Shall we say to this glorious agent, "Hither—to shalt thou come, and no further ?" Shall we admit his sovereignty in the old creation, and refuse it in the new ? Shall we acknowledge his right to do with that, which was negatively innocent, as he pleased ; and deny him the same right as to that which had actually offended him ? When the whole lump of our nature is corrupted by sin, shall we presume to say to him ; "Thou mayest not do according to thy pleasure ; but must be determined by the will of the clay ?" Shall we not rather adopt the acknowledgment of the Church ? "Now, O LORD, thou art our father : we are the clay, and thou our Potter, and we all are the work of thy hand."^g If we refuse this submission, we may be assured that he shall "dash us in pieces as a potter's vessel." For wo "unto him that striveth with his Maker ; let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth : shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou ? or thy work, He hath no hands ? Wo unto him that saith unto his father, What begettest thou ? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth ?"^h Would such questions, if addressed to our earthly parents, argue the most daring impiety ? What terms shall we find for expressing their wickedness, when directed to the Almighty Parent himself ? Of what account is the clay to the potter ? If "the vessel, that he made of it, be marred in his hand, he makes it again another vessel, as *seems good* to the potter to make it." Thus doth the LORD address us ; "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter ? Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel."ⁱ Man is a very important being in his own eye. But doth this increase his consequence with his Maker ? On the contrary, "all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing."^k "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance : behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.—All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity."^l

^e Gen. i. 24 ; ii. 7.^h Chap xlv. 9, 10.ⁱ Isa. xl. 15—17.^f Rom. ix. 21.^g Jer. xviii. 4—6.^g Isa. lxiv. 8.^k Dan. iv. 35.

2. This perfection is very apparent in the whole management of the world of *nature*. Often indeed does God employ the elements as the instruments of his justice. But in his ordinary administration, they are to be viewed as the monitors of his sovereignty. “Fire, hail, snow, vapour, stormy wind, fulfil his word.”^m He not only, for judgment, “causeth it to rain on one city, and not on another;”ⁿ but, because it is his pleasure, he causeth “it to rain on the earth where no man is, on the wilderness wherein there is no man.”^o “He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth; his word runneth very swiftly. He giveth snow like wool; he scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes. He casteth forth his ice like morsels; who can stand before his cold? He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow.” All these are effects of his sovereignty in the natural kingdom; and his conduct in the world of grace is strictly analogous. For it immediately follows; “He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments they have not known them.”^p

3. God hath displayed his sovereignty in consecrating the *seventh* part of our *time* to his service. The worship of rational creatures is founded on the nature of God. But the limitation of the time, to be devoted to his service, depends upon his will. He might have restricted the labour of man to five days, or extended it to seven. He might have claimed six parts of our time and allowed us only the seventh to ourselves. In this case, we could have had no right to complain; for he would have ordered matters so, that, what part of our time soever was devoted to work, would have been sufficient for our sustenance. The reason assigned for the consecration of a seventh portion of our time, is God’s working six days, and resting on the seventh.^q But this is only to be viewed as the immediate reason. As his working exactly six days depended on his sovereign pleasure; to the same source must the sanctification of a seventh part of our time be ultimately traced. For he previously determined, in the immutable counsel of his will, to work only six days, to rest on the seventh, and therefore to appropriate this portion of time to his worship.

4. God hath signally displayed his sovereignty in permitting the *entrance* of *sin*. It would be every way unworthy of God, to suppose that he could not have prevented this. He, who formed intelligent creatures after his own image, could as easily have secured them in the possession of this state of integrity, without a possibility of falling. Had he pleased, sin would have been unknown both to angels and to men. We may be assured, there-

^m Psal. cxlviii. 8.

^p Psal. cxlvii. 15—20.

ⁿ Amos iv. 7.

^q Gen. ii. 2, 3.

^o Job xxxviii. 26.

fore, that he had a proper end in view in determining the permission of this greatest of evils. Reason itself teaches us, that whatever is permitted by the moral Governor of the world must be for the best. Scripture confirms its voice, by informing us that God maketh "the very wrath of man to praise him." We may therefore rest satisfied, that, in his infinite wisdom, he saw that he could bring greater glory to himself even by means of sin, than if it had never been permitted. He knew that there would be an opportunity for the display of perfections, which otherwise, although revealed, could never have been exercised;—for the display of justice in the punishment of sin, or of mercy in the pardon of it, or of both with respect to different objects. But his knowledge of the possibility of this, laid him under no necessity as to the event. Was it an act of his sovereign will to manifest his perfections at all? It was no less a sovereign act to determine that they should be displayed in this particular way, as the consequence of the entrance of sin. Had he seen meet to restrict himself to that display of his perfections which was consistent with a state of universal innocency, no one could have had a right to find fault. Although millions of intelligent creatures suffer, in consequence of his permitting the entrance of sin, no one may dare to complain. For, "who hath enjoined him his way? or who can say, Thou hast wrought iniquity."r

Again, the measure of this evil is entirely the result of his sovereign pleasure. He might have suffered sin to enter among angels, and prevented its introduction into our lower world. Or he might have permitted this rebellion on his footstool, and prevented the possibility of its raising its head around his throne. It might have been so ordered, that only a part of the human race should have been involved in rebellion; while the integrity of others might have been secured, like that of holy angels. Nay, he might have suffered the evil to extend as far in heaven as it hath done on earth, and given it that restraint on earth which it hath had in heaven. Various conjectures may be offered as to the reasons of the divine conduct in these respects; and various reflections may be made, illustrating its infinite propriety. But all these things must be ultimately resolved into the pleasure of Him who "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."s

We may add, that one great end for which God hath permitted the entrance of this greatest of evils, is deeply to impress rational creatures with a sense of this adorable perfection. It might have been manifested in a variety of instances, although sin had never entered. It was, as has been seen, actually manifested before the entrance of sin. But, had not the eternal interests of intelligent creatures immediately depended on the exercise of this perfection, it could never have appeared with such glory and majesty.

r Job xxxvi. 23.
Vol. II.

s Eph. i. 11.

5. The sovereignty of God eminently appears in *suspending* the whole happiness of mankind on the *conduct* of *one* person. This perfection, indeed, is not the only one that may be traced in the federal character given to our common parent. If we take a just view of it, we shall perceive a striking display of divine grace. The carnal heart, which still reflects on the ways of God, may be apt to accuse his justice, and to insinuate, that matters had been set on a better footing for the human race, if the happiness or misery of every individual had depended on his own conduct; that, in this case, although many, "like Adam," might "have transgressed the covenant," it is improbable that all would have done so; that, at any rate, the fall, and the consequent misery of some, would have deterred others from following their example. But every one knows, that there is no tie which more powerfully restrains man than a regard to his offspring; that this will influence, when every other consideration is ineffectual. And surely, there never was a parent who felt the force of this obligation so powerfully as Adam. He felt it in all its sinless purity, and in all its possible extent. His individual interest was not merely at stake. He saw countless millions of his posterity looking up to him as the trustee of their happiness, or as the cause of their misery, not for time only, but for eternity. He knew that every one of these, in their successive generations, would either rise up and call him blessed, or accuse him as the murderer of his offspring.

But although we have abundant reason to admire the grace of God in this transaction, it also bears a striking impress of sovereignty. It flowed from the nature of God, that, when he formed a rational creature, he should give him a law. But his entering into covenant with man was the result of his pleasure. He might have made a covenant with Adam, without the idea of representation; or he might have extended it to all, so that the condition should have respected every one in an individual capacity. He doth not ask the consent of all whom this covenant concerns. As the Lord of all, he subjects them to it in their common parent. He doth not even require the formal consent of the common representative. As a sovereign, he promulgates the covenant in the form of a command: "The Lord God commanded the man."^t He denies liberty to his creature to dispute his authority. He knew that an innocent creature could not do so. The time, limited for probation, depended also entirely on his will. He might either make this known to Adam, or conceal it from him, as he pleased.

6. He signally displayed his sovereignty in immediately suspending the happiness of man on obedience to a *positive* precept. "The Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day

^t Gen. ii. 16.

“that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.”^u Had man transgressed any precept of the moral law, his fall would have been no less certain. But why make a regard to this positive injunction the turning hinge of his obedience? Why not rather rest it on a moral precept, the reasonableness of which would have been more evident to man, as flowing from the nature of his Creator; while the idea of disobedience might have affected his mind with greater horror? Here God manifested his absolute authority. Had he fixed on a moral, rather than on a positive precept, the reasonableness of the thing itself might have seemed to be the origin of the obligation. But God would teach his creature, that *his* will was the formal reason of obedience; and that man was equally bound to obey, where he saw no abstract reason for the duty, as where he did. Whence we may observe by the way, that moral obligation is not founded on what some call “the fitness of things,” but on the will of the Supreme Lawgiver; and that this can be known to us only in consequence of his being pleased to reveal it. God makes man lord of the lower creation. But he must know, that his dominion is limited, and that absolute sovereignty is the prerogative of his Maker alone. He gives him power over all things in this world, but one. A single tree shows the limitation of his authority. The more paltry the object, the more striking the display of divine dominion. This is a tree, not without Eden, or in an obscure corner of it, but “in the midst of the garden.” It must be still in his eye, or in his way, while he is engaged about his work; that it may still remind him of the sovereignty of God, and of his own dependence. The authority of the Lawgiver must be no less the reason of his faith, than of his obedience. Nothing in the appearance of the tree could indicate that fatal tendency ascribed to it; but every thing quite the contrary. For “it was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes.”^v Yet man is bound to believe that the taste of this tree is mortal, because God hath said it. He must rather discredit the evidence of his own senses, than that of God. His understanding must refuse to hear their testimony, however plausible, in contradiction to the divine.

7. The divine conduct with respect to *angels* contains a striking display of sovereignty. God, in his eternal purpose, chose some angels, and rejected others. We accordingly read of *elect* angels. Thus Paul addresses Timothy; “I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels.”^w On them he determined to confer an eternity of holiness and felicity; while he decreed to permit the fall of myriads of others, and to leave them in their state of guilt and misery. These, whom he suffered to fall, and whom he cast off for ever, were by nature as pure and perfect as those who “kept their first estate.” Hence it is evident, that they were chosen, not because of any superior excellency, but merely from distinguishing love. Their stand-

^u Gen. ii. 16, 17.^v Chap. iii. 6.^w 1 Tim. v. 21.

ing, while others fell. must be ultimately resolved into the purpose of God, pre-ordaining that they should stand. For nothing takes place in time, but in consequence of an unalterable decree from eternity.

It pleased God to display the sovereignty of his will, not merely with respect to his creatures as fallen, but with respect to them as innocent. He willed to show, not only that, as transgressors, they could not make themselves to differ; but that, as sinless creatures, their standing primarily depended on an act of his sovereign pleasure. We are bound, indeed, to believe, that both those angels who apostatized, and man, had abstractedly a sufficiency of grace for obedience, if they inclined to exercise it. But they could not continue in the proper exercise of their freedom of will, unless God willed that they should do so. For "in him we are moved."^x As the creature cannot resist the divine will, as little can he effectually will any thing, unless it be the pleasure of God that the event shall certainly take place.

It therefore appears, that God absolutely decreed the permission of sin, in order to illustrate the glory of his own sovereignty and independence, as contrasted with the mere dependence of his most exalted creatures; to shew that, in their most perfect state, they are indebted to him, not only for their faculties, but for the proper exercise of them in every instance; and that even when they have happiness in their own hands, they cannot keep it, except the Supreme Lord efficaciously will that this shall be the case. He suffered his most holy creatures to manifest their comparative imperfection, for the illustration of his own absolute and immutable perfection. "Behold, he put no trust in his servants, and his angels he charged with folly."^y Thus he makes it evident, that the greatest glory of the creature consists, not in his will being independent of God's but in its being so determined and influenced by his, that the creature cannot possibly choose what is evil. For surely, an elect angel, who cannot sin, is in a state of higher perfection than one, who, although free from sin, might be a devil the next moment. The creature is never so like his Maker, as when, by a sovereign act of the divine will, he is unalterably determined to good. That freedom of will which Adam had, and which many of his fallen race lay claim to, although it may seem more remote from dependence, is nearer to sin. It has the semblance of a greater conformity to the sovereignty of God. But it has nothing more. For the absolute sovereignty of his will is inseparably connected with the immutability of his nature. While he does whatsoever he wills, he cannot will to do what is inconsistent with his infinite holiness.

We may observe, by the way, the absurdity of the doctrine of those who assert, that God has given to all, who hear the gospel,

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Acts xvii. 28.

^y Job iv. 18.

a sufficiency of grace to believe and repent, if they will. For if God does not effectually will that they shall believe and repent, all this pretended sufficiency of grace must be to no purpose. It is also evident that the state of every believer in Christ is more secure than was that of the first Adam. For the will of the Christian, by the unalterable purpose and almighty power of God, is unchangeably, although in this life imperfectly, determined to good ; whereas that of our common representative, although perfect, was mutable.

The same sovereignty appears, when we consider the *way* in which they are brought to confirmation in their state of blessedness. Had God pleased, he might have permitted their apostacy, as well as that of the other "sons of God." Such was his conduct towards all the "vessels of mercy" among the human race. Their fall must be preparatory to a more glorious rising. But while he glorifies his sovereignty, he will do it in a variety of ways, whether mercy or justice be the end. While he is pleased to save some lost sinners of mankind, he chooses rather to preserve a part of the angelic family from being lost.

But perhaps the sovereignty of God most signally appears in the rejection of *all* the fallen angels. "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."^z "The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day."^a Here the display of sovereignty appears more striking, if we contrast with this his conduct towards many of the human race. They have become partners with devils in their guilt and condemnation ; yet they are objects of mercy. Although in the scale of being, the human nature is far inferior to the angelic ; men are "redeemed from the lowest hell," while this is the portion of all the fallen angels. These *morning-stars* are covered with everlasting darkness, and worms of the dust are exalted in their stead. No Saviour is provided for a superior nature ; yet the eternal Word becomes flesh. "For verily he took not upon him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham."^b Angels are eternally punished for one transgression. Men, whose iniquities are more than the hairs upon their heads, are pardoned. Mercy is not once exhibited to one angel that fell ; while those sinners of the human family, who have a thousand times rejected this gracious exhibition, are eventually "brands plucked out of the fire."

The ingenuity of man has devised various reasons for the divine conduct in this respect. It has been supposed, that God might choose rather to save fallen man than fallen angels, because the latter sinned without any temptation ; whereas man was

z 2 Pet. ii. 4.

a Jude 6.

b Heb. ii. 16.

caught in the snare of the devil. It has been said, that there was not the same reason for the recovery of any of the angelic family, because the apostacy did not extend to them all. Various conjectures of a similar kind have been made. But we can give no other reason for God's passing by all fallen angels, while he fixed his love on some of our rebellious race, than that which we have in the language of Nebuchadnezzar : " He doth according " to his will in the army of heaven." *c* *Legions* of this army rebelled against their Lord. Had he pleased, he could have delivered them from their guilt, and restored them to obedience. But it was *his will* that they should eternally reap the fruits of their disobedience.

If " he doth according to his will in the army of heaven," who can deny his right to do so—" among the inhabitants of this " earth?" If God might choose some angels, and reject others, may he not act the same part with respect to men? If there was no injustice or partiality in his conduct towards these " sons of " God;" can his conduct be unjust or partial in making a sovereign distinction among the sons of Adam? If the one was not inconsistent with his infinite goodness, how can such inconsistency appear with respect to the other? Let fallen angels complain, if any of them can presume so far; because they are all left to perish, while many of the human race are saved.— " But who art thou, O *man*, who repliest against God?" Might he not with equal justice have condemned the whole of this race, as all the apostate angels? If he is pleased to save any, although mercy be not extended to all, what right hast thou to arraign his conduct? May he not do with his own as he pleaseth? If thou wilt oppose divine sovereignty, do it consistently. Before thou deniest the doctrine of a sovereign choice among men, tell thy Maker to his face that he acted unjustly in passing by all the fallen angels. But, arrogant creature, thou art silent on this head. Even fallen angels must be astonished at thy blind partiality, and clearly perceive that thou judgest of equity according to the relation it bears to thy own interest. Or shall I rather say, that they rejoice in their success in blinding thy mind on this subject; as constituting an eminent part of their revenge against the sovereign Disposer of all, for the awful display of his sovereignty at their expense? Is it thus they attempt to rob God of the glory, and man of the blessed fruits, of that attribute from which they derive no benefit themselves? And is this all thy return of gratitude to God, for the ineffable advantage that accrues to thy fallen nature from the exercise of this adorable perfection? Dost thou " thus requite the LORD, O foolish and un- " wise?"

I shall only further add on this article, that the sovereignty of God eminently appears in exalting fallen man to *greater honour*

than that enjoyed by angels who never fell. I speak not of the honour to which our nature is advanced in the person of the Mediator. How great is that of the younger brethren ! They are redeemed by the blood of Him who is God. They are made to sit with him upon his throne. The highest dignity to which holy angels are admitted, is that of being servants to Christ as Mediator. Nay, "are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth " to minister to them who are the heirs of salvation?" Did they imitate the language of presumptuous man, they would say ; " It " were honour enough for fallen worms, to minister to pure spir- " its who never sinned. Instead of this, however, by an absolute " determination, we are required to minister to them. We must " watch over their bodies and waft their souls to heaven. They " sit on their seats,^d and our highest honour is to stand before " God,^e or to fly through the universe in his service."^f But were it possible, they could utter such language, they would instantly be hurled into hell. These intelligent spirits must be fully persuaded that the distinction results from the sovereignty of their Creator ; and even this sovereignty they adore. In this consists the perfection of these " ministers of his," that they " do " his pleasure."^g And this very perfection are we taught to pray for, as the highest honour of our nature. Our Lord therefore taught his disciples to say ; " Thy will be done on earth as it is " in heaven."^h

8. God manifested his sovereignty, in choosing *Israel* as a peculiar people. Both in the choice itself, and in the circumstances of it, may we clearly perceive the display of this perfection. Let us attend to the *choice* itself. Is not God the common father of men ? Are not all equally his offspring ? Hath he not " made " of one blood all nations to dwell on the face of the whole earth ?" Is there any nation, however remote from others, however barbarous, to which he can say, Ye are not the work of my hands ? Yet here we find him selecting one nation from all the rest, to enjoy the honours and privileges, of a peculiar people. Were they to be more especially under the care of his providence ? Was he to favour them with a more fertile land, richer harvests, a more abundant increase ? Was he to give them greater success against their enemies, or to make them more distinguished for wisdom, and proficiency in arts and sciences ? All this had been little. He chose them to the enjoyment of the means of salvation, while he excluded every other nation under heaven from this privilege. " He shewed his word unto " Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not " dealt so with any nation ; and as for his judgments, they have " not known them."ⁱ

Many, indeed, in order to draw a veil over divine sovereignty,

^d Rev. iv. 4. ; xi. 16.
^g Psal. ciii. 21.

^e Luke i. 19.
^h Mat. vi. 10.

^f Dan. ix. 21.
ⁱ Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20.

attempt to depreciate this mercy ; as if it were to judge hardly of God, to suppose that he left all the nations, that were destitute of revelation, to perish for eternity. But the Israelites were assured that this was their distinguishing mercy ; that they were “ a blessed people who knew the joyful sound ;” that where there was “ no vision, the people would perish ;” and that God would “ pour his fury on the heathen.” It is the harmonious voice of Scripture, that those who are “ aliens from the commonwealth of “ Israel,” being “ strangers to the covenants of promise,” have therefore “ no hope,” and are “ without God,” or “ atheists in the world.”^k

If this were not the case, I shall venture to say that the Israelites, so far from being more highly favoured than other nations, were treated with far greater severity. If God did not display his sovereignty in choosing them to the enjoyment of privileges necessary to salvation, he undoubtedly displayed that same perfection, though in a very different way, in subjecting them to a bondage from which all other nations were free, while they were not to be any better for it. For the law was “ a yoke, which,” an apostle says, “ neither our fathers nor we were able to bear.”^l

Whence, then, could God exercise such a power as this ?— Whence is it that we have no right to impeach his justice ? It is because, being the Sovereign LORD, he may “ do according to his “ will among the inhabitants of this earth.”

Now, what God did to the literal posterity of Jacob, was typical of his conduct to spiritual Israel. Did he choose them to be externally holy ?^m This choice was figurative of the election of his people “ to be holy and without blame before him in love ?” Hence, as has been formerly observed, the Spirit of God applies to them that very language, which is primarily used concerning the type : “ Ye are a chosen generation, an holy nation, a peculiar “ people.”ⁿ What was originally extended to all the descendants of Jacob, is here restricted to those who are “ elect according to “ the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of “ the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus “ Christ.”^o

If we attend to the *circumstances* of this choice, the same character will appear to be equally impressed on it. Were they entitled to this distinction, from any superior worth on their part ? If this was the case, they must have possessed this recommendation, in respect of origin, dignity, wealth, extent, wisdom or goodness. Were they better than other nations as to *origin* ? Whatever they might themselves imagine, they had no pre-eminence, according to the estimation of God. Thus he addresses them : “ Thy birth, and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan ; “ thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite.”^p Nay, thus he commands them to address him, when appearing before

^k Eph. ii. 12.

ⁿ 1 Pet. ii. 9.

^l Acts xv. 10.

^o Chap. i. 2.

^m Exod. xix. 6.

^p Ezek. xvi. 3.

him with their oblations ; “ A Syrian ready to perish was my “ Father.”^q In their solemn approaches, they must still remember the meanness of their origin, and acknowledge that, in this respect, they had no ground of boasting before God.

Could the temporal *dignity* of their situation, when God separated them to himself, entitle them to this distinction ? Were they not *aliens* in Egypt ? For several centuries they were strangers in a land that was not theirs.^r Yea, they were *slaves*. Had God regarded national dignity, he would undoubtedly have preferred the Egyptians, who were not only their masters, but a very ancient people, and distinguished as a nation long before the name of Israel was known.

They could boast as little of their *riches*. They had no possessions of their own. That Syrian, their father, from whom they received their name, “ sojourned in Egypt.”^s Abraham had no higher character. Wherever he was, whether in Canaan, or in Egypt, he was still a sojourner. His only estate was a burial-place, as if God meant to teach him, that he should have no rest but in the grave. What riches they had, when they left Egypt, were given them by God, as the reward of their past labours.

Did their *extent* as a people recommend them to God ? So contemptible were they in this respect, that, had he judged after the manner of man, they would have been the last nation that he would have selected. Observe how Moses addresses Israel on this head. “ The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, “ because ye were more in number than any people, (for ye were “ the fewest of all people).”^t This was to be an article in their solemn confession, already referred to : “ Thou shalt speak, and “ say before the LORD thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was “ my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned “ there with a *few*.”^u God promised them all the good which he afterwards conferred when they were despicable as to numbers. He said, “ Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of “ your inheritance : when they were but a few men in number : “ yea, very few, and strangers in it.”^v

But perhaps their superior *wisdom* procured this distinguishing honour. On the contrary, in respect of human wisdom, they were greatly inferior to some other nations. They were far surpassed by the Egyptians. Their conduct, in a variety of instances, shews their deficiency as to divine wisdom. Had they not been formerly enamoured with the brutish worship of Egypt, would they ever have thought of making a calf ? Had they not been extremely stupid, would they ever have thought of it, after hearing the voice of God ? Moses accuses them of requiting the Lord, “ as a foolish people and unwise.” They receive the very

^q Deut. xxvi. 5.

^r Deut. vii. 7.

^s Gen. xv. 13.

^t Chap. xxvi. 5.

^u Deut. xxvi. 5.

^v Psal. cy. 11, 12.

same character from God. "They are a nation void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them."^w And they continued to deserve no better character, in their succeeding generations: "My people is foolish,—they are sottish children, and they have none understanding."^x

If they were so deficient as to wisdom in divine things, it cannot be supposed that their superior goodness would atone for their other defects. This, indeed, is immediately added as the great evidence of their want of true wisdom: "They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge."^y Even the sons of Jacob were stained by envy, cruelty and perfidy. They hated Joseph because their father loved him. They first conspired against his life, and afterwards sold him for a slave. Their cruel and perfidious conduct to the Shechemites made Jacob "to stink among the inhabitants of the land, amongst the Canaanites, and the Perizzites;"^z the very people whom God, because of their wickedness, was to drive out before Israel. We have formerly seen, that in Egypt they polluted themselves with the idolatry of the inhabitants of that land. Afterwards, as if a mere conformity to their idolatrous neighbours had been too little, they did worse than all the nations round about.^a "worse than the heathen whom the Lord had destroyed before them."^b

The all-wise God knew their character when he chose them. None can be so foolish as to imagine that he hoped they would prove better than they did, that they would be awed by his judgments, or mollified by his mercies. He foresaw the whole extent of their wickedness. Thus, he expressly testifies that he knew what they were, and what they would be. He declares that when he fixed his love on them, he discerned nothing that could in any respect or degree prove a recommendation. He illustrates their original situation by a most striking allusion to a child exposed by its unnatural parent, according to a barbarous custom that greatly prevailed among the heathen. Instead of wealth or power, he saw nothing but nakedness and weakness! Instead of wisdom or moral beauty, all the ignorance of infancy and the grossest pollution! "Thou wast cast out in the open field, to the lothing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born."^c He also declares his certain foreknowledge of their future conduct: "I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb."^d

Since such was the character of this people, why did God choose them? The sovereignty of his own will was the only reason of his choice. He looked for no moving cause without himself. He took care that they should be particularly informed of this. Therefore Moses, having informed the Israelites, that the

^w Deut. xxxij. 6, 28.

^z Gen. xxxiv. 27, 30.

^b 2 Chr. xxxiii. 9.

^x Jer. iv. 22.

^a Ezek. xvi. 46, 47.

^c Ezek. xvi. 5.

^y Ibid.

^d Isa. xlviii. 8.

Lord did not set his love upon them, nor choose them because of their number, subjoins ;—" But because the LORD loved you, and " because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto " your fathers." ^e The faithfulness of God, although here connected with his sovereignty, is not to be considered as a reason for his love, but for their enjoyment of the fruits of it, in being " brought out," as it follows, " with a mighty hand, and redeemed out of " the house of bondmen." For the operation of the faithfulness of God, with respect to them, was only the fruit of the eternal purpose of his love. He had " sworn to their fathers," because he had, in absolute sovereignty, chosen their seed to be his peculiar people. Moses elsewhere assures them, that God stood in no need of them as a people : " Behold the heaven, and the heaven of heavens is the LORD's thy God, the earth also with all " that therein is. Only the LORD had delight in thy fathers to " love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above " all people, as it is this day." ^f And well might the man of God remind Israel of the sovereignty of this choicé, when he pleads it with God himself, as a more powerful argument in their behalf, than all their unworthiness could be against them : " Look not " unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor " to their sin.—Yet they are thy people, and thine inheritance." ^g

Now, as, in the choice of literal Israel, God had no respect to any worth in the object of his love, this was a *figure* of the sovereign manner in which he chooses his true Israel. They had no merit, when he separated them as his peculiar people. Thus they fitly prefigured them, who are called, " not for works of " righteousness which they have done, but of his own mercy." Did he know that the future conduct of his chosen people would be equally undeserving ? In this also they exhibited the character of his spiritual seed. For when he fixed his love on them, he foresaw all their wanderings and apostacies, their unbelief and ingratitude. But he " loved them, because he loved them." If, without any obstacle on the part of his justice or goodness, he might single out one nation to the enjoyment of spiritual privileges, to the exclusion of every other ; who will presume to say that it is inconsistent with any of these perfections, that he should select certain persons to the enjoyment of all the benefit arising from these spiritual privileges, although others be excluded ? Indeed, to shew us the great design of this part of the divine conduct, we find this national election *terminating* in a choice of individuals. When God had served his ends, by the election of a particular nation, when he was about to abolish this distinction, we find it running into an election of persons, to the exclusion of the body of that once-favoured nation. Were the carnal Jews ready to object, that the Christian religion could not be true, because in this case God must have rejected his people, and broken his promise ? the apostle Paul could reply ; " They are not all

^e Deut. vii. 7, 8.

^f Chap. x : 14, 15.

^g Chap. ix. 27, 29.

"Israel, which are of Israel: neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children.—They which are the children of the flesh are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." Thus he shews that it could by no means be said, that "the word of God had taken none effect;" that his promise to the fathers had failed.^h He shews that the promise, although it literally and primarily respected the choice of the nation, as such, to distinguishing privileges, carried in its womb, nay, ultimately and specially respected a further display of divine sovereignty, in the choice of individuals of that nation to the essence of these privileges; that although its outward aspect seemed confined to Israel according to the flesh, it was inwardly pointed to all who should be the seed of Abraham by faith, "not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles."ⁱ He even shews that all along, under the old dispensation, the national election to external privileges, was only a figure of a personal election to those which are inward; that the former was as it were the covering of the other, the cabinet, however precious in itself, that contained the more precious jewel. He therefore applies the history of Elias, as a proof of personal and particular election.^k The prophet imagined that he was "left alone" in the service of JEHOVAH. "But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself, seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal." Here we have an election of *individuals*, as distinguished from the nation in general; an election of a *certain* number, "seven thousand men;" an election to *holiness*, for they made no compliances with idolatry; an election of *grace*, and terminating in *efficacious* power; for God claims the work as wholly his own; "I have reserved:" and an election *to the praise of the glory of his grace*, as the end; "I have reserved to myself." The apostle asserts that he taught no new doctrine; that when he affirmed a personal election, he affirmed no more than what was taught by God himself, and exemplified in the history of Israel, in the days of Elias: "*Even so then at this present time also, there is a remnant, according to the election of grace.*" Thus it is evident, that the national election of Israel, to external privileges, *typified, terminated in, nay, all along included,* an election of persons to that saving grace of which these were only the means.

10. There never was, and there never will be, any nation so peculiarly distinguished as ancient Israel. But the sovereignty of God still appears in that distinction which he makes among *nations* with respect to the *means* of salvation. How many nations are there in the world that never heard of salvation? How many, that have been deprived of the gospel during a long series of ages? Who hath made us, in these isles of the sea, to differ from others, as to the external privileges of grace? Are we Britons so

^h Rom. ix. 6—8.ⁱ Ver. 24.^k Chap. xi. 2—5.

much better than the natives of Hindostan, that we are favoured with the gospel, while they are buried in the darkness of heathenism ? Let the history of our conduct in that distant country, for several ages, give an answer to the question. Why hath God left the Chinese, perhaps in other respects the wisest people in the world, in gross obscurity, and extended his mercy to us ? Did he expect that we would be more grateful and obedient to him, or more humane and loving to man, than many other nations whom he hath left in darkness ? To say so, would be to arraign the foreknowledge of God. For there are other nations in the world, that never enjoyed the means of salvation, whose manners would extort a blush from the generality of professed Christians, did they "not refuse to be ashamed." We must either deny divine prescience altogether, or admit that God foreknew all this ; foreknew that the greatest part of those called Christians, would "cause even *his* name to stink among the "inhabitants" of heathen countries ; that their ungodly conduct would prove the greatest obstacle to the propagation of Christianity. Why then did he favour such nations with the gospel, and deny it to others ? We must undoubtedly resolve it into the sovereignty of his own will. This choice of nations to external privileges, is as really an act of sovereignty, as the choice of individuals to eternal life ; unless it can be proved that the enjoyment of the means is not necessary to the attainment of the end. Let those who think so answer these questions ; "How shall they "believe in him of whom they have not heard ? And how shall "they hear without a preacher ?" But if it be necessary to hear of Christ before men can believe in him, and if "there is not "another name under heaven, given among men by which we "must be saved ;" surely, God displays the sovereignty of his will, in giving this revelation to some, and withholding it from others. This display may not at first strike the eye so much as that with respect to the end. But it is for want of attention. For if men cannot be saved without the gospel of the grace of God, (and there is not one word in the Bible that gives us reason to suppose the contrary,) he acts no less sovereignly in refusing men the means, than in withholding the end ; because the end cannot be attained without the means.

SECTION VIII.

On Divine Sovereignty in the Division of Canaan ;—the Treatment of the Tribes of Israel ;—the Choice of a Place of Worship ;—the Employment of Means and Instruments of Judgment or Mercy ;—the Distribution of Gifts ;—the Management of our Lot ;—the Afflictions of the Children of God ;—with respect to earthly Kingdoms ;—in relation to the Church.—Severe Judgments inflicted for the Denial of this Perfection.

11. THE sovereignty of God is illustrated by the manner in which he *divided the land* of Canaan among the tribes of Israel. This was by lot, as it was declared by Moses :^m “ The land “ shall be divided by lot ; according to the names of the tribes of “ their fathers they shall inherit. According to the lot shall the “ possessions thereof be divided, between many and few.” While by this ordination God taught his people their dependence upon his sovereign pleasure for all temporal mercies, it had a further and a special reference to those which “ pertain to life and godliness.” No tribe, no family could say, “ We have obtained “ from Joshua a better inheritance than such another tribe or “ family, because we had a superior claim by our services.” For “ the lot was cast into the lap, and the whole disposal thereof was “ of the LORD.” No one could say, “ I shall dwell here, because “ it is my choice.” For the choice was wholly God’s. In this was prefigured the choice of the spiritual Israel ; which is “ not “ of him that willet, nor of him that runneth, but of God that “ sheweth mercy.” This very language is applied to the seed of the antitypical Jacob. Thus in the forty-seventh Psalm, which contains a celebration of the ascension of our Lord, of the true Joshua’s entering into his rest, and of the blessed fruits of it in the subjection of the nations to the faith, the Church adopts this language, as ascribing all spiritual blessings to “ the good pleasure “ of his will ;” “ He shall choose our inheritance for us ; the excellency of Jacob whom he loved.”ⁿ Nay, that Elect in whom the soul of the Father delighteth, employs the same language concerning himself, in his public character. “ Thou maintainest “ my lot.”^o He acknowledges that his designation to the work of redemption, and the consequent reward, were primarily to be ascribed to the sovereign choice of the Father, who “ hath chosen “ us in him.”^p

The same language runs through the whole of the New Testament. Hath God chosen his people to a glorious inheritance ? It was not for their foreseen faith, good works, or perseverance. It is as much of sovereignty as the appointment of the tribes of Israel to particular inheritances. The Gentiles are, therefore,

^m Num. xxvi. 55, 56.

ⁿ Psal. xlvii. 4.

^o Psal. xvi. 5.

^p Eph. i. 4.

said to "receive an inheritance," literally, "a *lot* among them "who are sanctified."^o We are "made meet to be partakers of "the *lot* of the saints in light."^p Here creature-merit is excluded on every side. For the inheritance is not only called a *lot*, but we are said to be "made meet for" it, which plainly shews, that we are naturally unmeet, and cannot qualify ourselves by any thing that we can do. Not only is the inheritance said to be given to the people of God by *lot*: but the expression is reversed. They are said to be chosen to it in the same manner. For in Christ "we have obtained an inheritance," or, "we have been "designed by *lot*:" and no wonder such language is used, as it follows,—"being predestinated *according to the purpose of him* "who worketh *all* things after the counsel of *his own will*."^q The latter language shows the reason why the former is used. It is said, that we are designed by *lot*; because our enjoyment of the inheritance depends wholly on the sovereign pleasure of God. This mode of expression does not denote any thing accidental or contingent with respect to him; but that he pays as little regard to merit in the objects of his choice, as if they were chosen by *lot*; as little, as a creature would do, who should decide with respect to an earthly inheritance in this way. We receive the inheritance willingly. But it is God who "worketh in us to will." We are eventually qualified for it. But this is only as he "work-eth in us to do."

12. As God manifested his sovereignty, in the instance already mentioned, with respect to the tribes of Israel in general, he did so, in other instances, as to particular *tribes, families, and persons*. It is generally admitted, that before the giving of the law, the first-born of the different families of Israel had acted as priests. It appears, that for a time God sanctioned this practice, by hal- lowing the first-born.^r Now, Levi was not the first-born. Yet his posterity were separated to God for the work of the priesthood. Was it because of any superior worth in their progenitor? Surely no. For Levi was brother to Simeon in cruelty. His children could not be better qualified than their brethren for the service of the altar, because their father had made a sacrifice of the Shechemites. This designation is wholly referred to the pleasure of God. "The LORD separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark "of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD, to min- ister unto him, and to bless in his name."^s "The priests, the "sons of Levi shall come near; for them the LORD thy God "hath chosen to minister unto him."^t

Neither was Judah the first-born. But God conferred the sceptre on the tribe which bore his name. He "chose not the "tribe of Ephraim: but chose the tribe of Judah."^u To it also he gave the exclusive promise of the descent of the Messiah.

^o Acts xxvi. 18.

^r Num. iii. 13.

^u Psal. lxxviii. 67, 68.

^p Col. i. 12.

^s Deut. x. 8.

^q Eph. i. 11.

^t Chap. xxi. 5.

In this tribe the regal power was confined to the family of Jesse, although it was not distinguished for wealth or greatness. Thence some spake contemptibly of David : " Who is David ? or who is " the son of Jesse ?" ^v From this consideration David himself extols divine sovereignty : " What am I, and what is my father's " house, that thou hast brought me hitherto ?" Bethlehem was but a mean village. Yet here must the Messiah be born : " And " thou Bethlehem-Ephratah, although thou be little among the " thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto " me, that is to be ruler in Israel." ^w The family of Joseph seems to have been one of the meanest in the house of David, or belonging to Bethlehem. For Joseph and Mary could find no lodging but in a stable. Yet from this family must the Messiah spring.

13. God signalized his sovereignty in the *choice* of that particular *place* where he would be worshipped. All places are alike to Him, to whom " the earth belongs, and the fulness thereof ;" who " filleth heaven and earth ;" whom " heaven and the heaven of " heavens cannot contain." But, under the law, he inculcated the doctrine of his sovereignty on the church, by not only regulating the whole manner of worship, but by limiting the place. That she might have still more reason for learning unreserved submission to his will, she was long kept in suspense. All that she was permitted to know, was the certainty of God's choosing such a place. But where it might be, or when he might be pleased to declare his will in this respect, she was absolutely ignorant. " There " shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose, to " cause his name to dwell there, thither shall ye bring all that I " command you." ^x He dealt with the seed of Abraham as he had done with their father, with respect to that very place where he was afterwards to put his name. He commanded him to go and offer up his son on one of the mountains which he should tell him of. ^y Here, indeed, was the true Isaac sacrificed. This place, although in itself no better, was preferred to every other in the tribe of Judah, nay, in the land of Canaan : " Unto the place " which the LORD your God shall choose, *out of all your tribes*, " to put his name there,—thither thou shalt come." ^z If their ritual worship, though conformable to the divine institution in every other respect, wanted this single requisite of being offered at this place, they were assured that it would be totally unacceptable. ^a When the LORD distinguished the tribe of Judah, by putting his name in Jerusalem, it was in the way of rejecting every place in the tribe of Ephraim, within the boundaries of which his tabernacle had stood for many ages. " He refused the " tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim : but " chose the tribe of Judah, the Mount Zion which he loved." ^b

^v 1 Sam. xxv. 10.

^w Micah v. 2.

^x Deut. xii. 12.

^y Gen. xxii. 2 ; 2 Chron. iii. 1.

^z Deut. xii. 5.

^a Ver. 11, 13, 14.

^b Psal. lxxviii. 68, 69.

Why did he prefer Judah to Ephraim, Jerusalem to Shiloh ? In Shiloh, indeed, his ordinances had been profaned. But he knew that this would soon be the case in Jerusalem also. We can give no reason for the preference, but that which God himself gives. This was his own pleasure. "The Lord hath chosen Zion ; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever : here will I dwell, *for I have desired it.*"^c

14. The same sovereignty appears in the *means* or *instruments* which God employs for accomplishing his purposes either of *judgment* or of *mercy*.

It would naturally occur to us, that when God meant to punish a people for their wickedness, he would employ instruments prepared for the work by a love of righteousness ; that the innocent should wield the weapons of his vengeance against the guilty, the sincere against the hypocritical, the humble against the haughty, and the merciful against those " who breathe out cruelty." But " his ways are not our ways, nor his thoughts our thoughts." He often takes a plan directly the reverse of that which would be supposed, or approved, by us. He employs the worst of men for the best of purposes. He takes instruments out of the devil's hand for performing his own work. He lets loose hell, that it may fight the battles of heaven. Short-sighted creatures are in danger of denying the work to be his, because they do not immediately discern his hand ; because they discern no hand save that of his enemies. But they consider not, that while the work is as really his own, as if instruments more apparently suited to it were employed, there is a more striking display of his wisdom and power, in making the very wrath of man to praise him, and in restraining the remainder of it. They have not learned, from the Sacred History, that this is the most ordinary method of the divine procedure. When God had a work of judgment to execute on the devoted family of the wicked Ahab,^d he employed an instrument little better than himself,^e and in one respect worse.^f Jehu, not only an idolater, but a vile hypocrite, is the man singled out from all the tribes of Israel for accomplishing God's work of vengeance on the house of Ahab.

In this very way hath God often punished his Church. Was not Sennacherib, an ambitious and blood-thirsty tyrant, the person selected as the instrument by whom JEHOVAH was " to perform his whole work on Mount Zion, and on Jerusalem ?"^g Here, we find a heathen employed against hypocritical professors ; a blasphemer of the true God used as " the rod of his anger." He, who dared to call the God of Jerusalem an idol, receives a commission from him to punish his own people.^h Does he not design the vainglorious Nebuchadnezzar his servant, even when seeking the destruction of Judah ? Hear, how he speaks

^c Psal. cxxxii. 13, 14.

^f Ver. 16.

^d 2 Kings ix. 7.

^g Isa. x. 12

^e Chap. x. 31.

^h Ver. 5—11.

by his prophet : “ Behold, I will send and take all the families of “ the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadnezzar the king of “ Babylon my servant, and will bring them against this land, and “ against the inhabitants thereof,—and will utterly destroy them, “ and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual “ desolations.”ⁱ

In the same sovereign way, does he fulfil his purposes of *mercy*. Sometimes, he employs *good* men in the work. He had a branch of his Church even in Sodom. For the deliverance of righteous Lot, Abraham obtains victory over four kings *k* “ Who raised “ up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave “ the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? He “ gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to “ his bow. He pursued them, and passed safely, even by the way “ that he had not gone with his feet.”^l At other times he employs *wicked* men. He had made heathens the instruments of punishing his people, and heathens are employed as the instruments of their deliverance. Cyrus knew as little of the true God as Sennacherib or Nebuchadnezzar. But God raises him up, and gives him all his power and success for this very end, that he might liberate his Church. He had called the king of Babylon his *servant*. But he calls the conquerer of Babylon his *anointed*.^m He gives him a more honourable epithet, because he called him to more honourable work, to work typical of that which was to be performed by his true Anointed. He extends this honour to the very army that Cyrus commanded. They were to be the instruments of accomplishing his purposes with respect to Babylon. Therefore, although an assemblage of heathens, he describes them as sanctified, or set apart to this work, by himself. Although they knew not that God who strengthened them, he calls them his “ mighty ones.” He speaks of them as “ rejoicing “ in his highness,” or “ glory,” because they rejoiced in that work which was to terminate in his glory, although they were ignorant of this.ⁿ

Notwithstanding the honourable epithets thus bestowed on Cyrus and his army, with respect to their work ; a very different picture is given of both, when their own character and designs are taken into consideration. They are exhibited as “ a cruel “ people, that will not shew mercy,” as “ having no pity on the “ fruit of the womb, and whose eye should not spare children.”^o Cyrus himself gets no better character than that of a bird of prey. While *ЖЕHOVAH* appeals to the immutability and absolute sovereignty of his purpose, as an incontrovertible evidence of his being the only true God ; he at the same time proclaims his almighty power in the manner of accomplishing it. “ I am God, “ and there is none else,—declaring the end from the beginning,

ⁱ Jer. xxv. 9.

^k Gen. xiv. 15.

^l Isa. xli. 2, 3.

^m Chap. xlv. 1—5.

ⁿ Chap. xiii. 3—5.

^o Ver. 18 ; Jer. l. 42.

"and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure : calling "a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my "counsel from a far country : yea, I have spoken it, I will also "bring it to pass ; I have purposed it, I will also do it."^h Behold the sovereignty of God ! He who "called the righteous "man from the east," is the same who "called a ravenous bird "from the east : " and both for the same work of liberating his captives. Both are under his direction, and in the calling of both he displays equal righteousness. For he saith of Cyrus, "I have "raised him up in righteousness."^g

Did the Lord destroy literal Babylon by means of "a ravenous "bird ?" Did he do it in righteousness ? Need we wonder, then, though he should observe the same course, in accomplishing the destruction of mystical Babylon, of which the other was only a type ? though he "cry to all the *fowls* that fly in the midst of "heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper "of the great God ?"^r Although, in the destruction of Babylon, God should employ men as irreligious as the heathen, or more so, as merciless as the Medes ; we must not therefore either deny, or be prejudiced against his work. The wickedness of the instruments is wholly their own. Whatever God does by them, he does it "in righteousness,"—Yet mark his language ; "I will "stir up the Medes against them :—their bows also shall dash "the young men to pieces, and they shall have no pity."^s "The "LORD hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes : for "his desire is against Babylon, to destroy it : because it is the "vengeance of the LORD, the vengeance of his temple."^t

God often gives a striking display of his sovereignty in punishing sin by sin. He does so in various ways. He makes one sin its own punishment. He punishes one sin by another committed by the same person. Or, he punishes the sin of one person, by means of a sin committed by another. As virtue is its own reward, in as far as "the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace ;" sin often proves its own punishment, in that misery which it brings along with it, as inseparable from its nature. Ahab's covetousness, in desiring the vineyard of Naboth, was undoubtedly his sin. But it was as certainly his punishment. For he "was heavy and displeased,—and laid "him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would "eat no bread."^u The pride of Haman was also its own punishment. For notwithstanding his great honours, he says ; "All "this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew "sitting at the king's gate."^v

Sometimes, he punishes a former sin by one that succeeds it. The sin of Judas, in betraying his Master, was punished by his

^h Isa. xlv. 9—11.
^t Jer. li. 11.

^g Chap. xlv. 13. ^r Rev. xix. 17.
^u 1 Kings xxi 1—4.

^s Isa. xlii. 17.
^v Esth. v. 13.

being left to become his own murderer. The Gentiles provoked God by their idolatry, in "changing the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." Now, mark their punishment. "*Wherefore* God also gave them up to uncleanness." And again; "Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge," or, "in acknowledgment, God gave them over to a reprobate mind."^w

He also punishes the sin of one person by that of another. The sin of David in the matter of Uriah and Bathsheba, was punished by the incest of Absalom. Therefore the Lord sent this message to David: "Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun."^x

In a word, the God of infinite holiness often uses Satan himself as his instrument. Thus we read, that, when he was plaguing the Egyptians, he "sent evil angels among them."^y He permitted him to act as a lying spirit in the mouth of the false prophets of Ahab, when he was about to accomplish the destruction of this wicked prince. He even employs him as an instrument for chastening his own people. Job was in part subjected to his power. We read of a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan had long bound. And the general experience of the Church concurs with the testimony of inspiration, in assuring us, that when a loving father means to humble and prove his own children, he often subjects them to severe discipline, by means of the temptations of this cruel one.

From these reflections we may learn, that we ought never to judge of a work merely from the means or instruments employed. Did we follow this rule, we would be at times in danger of mistaking God's work for the devil's, and the devil's for God's. Often God is doing his own work, when the carnal eye can perceive nothing but the sad working of human corruptions. And often the devil is doing his, when "transformed into an angel of light," and coming with such "deceivableness of unrighteousness," that "even the children of God may be in part deceived." It is not to the outward aspect of Providence that we are to look for direction; but "to the law, and to the testimony." Let us also beware of undervaluing his work, because of the instruments. This is an homage that he claims to his sovereignty, that we should not presume to limit him. For "as the heavens are above the earth, so are his ways above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts."

^w Rom i. 23, 24, 28.

^x 2 Sam. xii. 11, 12.

^y Psal lxxviii. 49.

15. The same sovereignty appears in the distribution of *natural gifts*. One "rejoiceth in his strength." The life of another is a constant struggle with constitutional imbecility. One is distinguished for the gift of prudence ; while indiscretion is the characteristic of another. Reason, in one, seems to vie with the intellect of angels ; in another, it scarcely equals animal instinct. Whence proceeds this astonishing difference ? We must not deny the operation of secondary causes. But it must be ultimately resolved into the sovereign will of that Lord who "giveth to "one five talents, to another two, and to another one."^z

16. The same thing appears from the whole management of our *lot*. Our very use of this word, with respect to human concerns, contains a virtual acknowledgment of divine sovereignty. Some, indeed, prefer other terms, which as they are more allied to the language of heathens, are too often used to convey similar sentiments. They talk of their *luck*, or their *fortune*. But the former is that which is consecrated by the Spirit of God. Thus did David the Type, nay, the glorious Antitype, express himself : "Thou maintainest my lot."^a Nor did either of these distinguished persons confine this language to the great and leading circumstances of life. For it is added, without any limitation ; "The *lines* are fallen unto me in pleasant places."^b

Nothing may seem more to depend on chance, or on the most trivial causes, than the place of our residence on this earth. Yet we are assured that God "hath determined the bounds of our "habitation."^c It is wholly the result of his sovereign will, that one is placed "in the valley of vision ;" and that another sits in "darkness, and in the region and shadow of death."

Scarcely in any respect does the exercise of this perfection more remarkably appear, than in the distribution of the enjoyments of this life. We see one born a beggar, and another a prince ; or one, who is born a beggar, advanced "to sit with "princes." On the other hand, one who has had the most honourable nativity, is sometimes brought down to the lowest station in society. It is undeniable, that much depends on second causes. "The hand of the diligent maketh rich," while "the soul of the "sluggard desireth, and hath nothing." But do we not often observe, that those who have equal advantages, and equal industry, have very unequal success ? Perhaps, you may have marked one, whose circumstances were originally the same with those of another, who was not inferior in capacity, in diligence, or in frugality, who was employed in the very same line. Yet with the one every thing has been unprosperous, while riches have flowed on the other. Nay, do we not sometimes see a person who possesses far less understanding, and discovers far less industry than another, prosper in all that he undertakes, while every attempt fails with the other ? In common language, men confess their

z Mat. xxv. 15.

a Psal. xvi. 5.

b Ver. 6.

c Acts xvii. 26.

inability to account for the difference. They call the latter an *unfortunate* man. But we must trace matters to another source, to the overruling providence of that God who manages all the concerns of men as he pleases. We must remember that he not only gives the means of becoming rich, but that it depends upon his pleasure to give success to these means ; that while “ the rich and poor meet together ; the LORD is the maker of them all.”^d The Israelites, therefore, are warned that it would be viewed as an evidence of their “ heart forgetting the LORD their God,” if they said, “ My power, and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth.” They are commanded, on the contrary, to “ remember that the LORD their God gave them power to get wealth.”^e Let us listen to the estimate of the wise man. “ I saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill, but time and chance happeneth to them all.”^f Does he here ascribe to mere accident what he denies to second causes ? No, surely : He only calls our attention to what appears as chance to unthinking man, but must indeed be ascribed to the invisible yet certain influence of the First Cause.

The divine pleasure regulates our lot as to the duration of life. Each of us may say with the Psalmist, “ My times are in thy hand.”^g For God “ hath determined not only the bounds of “ our habitation,” but “ the times before appointed.”^h One opens his eyes on the light of life, only that he may close them in death ; another is cut off in childhood ; a third, amidst all the gaities of youth. Some are struck down in the prime of life ; while others are spared, till “ the grasshopper is a burden.”ⁱ

How much does this sovereignty appear in the manner in which life is terminated ! “ One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet : His breasts are full of milk, and “ his bones are moistened with marrow : and another dieth in “ the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure.”ⁱ

17. We cannot consider the *afflictions* of the people of God, without admiring his sovereignty. This character appears written on his conduct, whether we compare the situation of one Christian with that of another, or the sufferings of the righteous in general with those of the wicked. Do we compare the situation of one of the children of God with that of another ; we perceive great reason humbly to adore his sovereignty. One has a great share of prosperity. He enjoys the blessing of health. His family increases. He is favoured, not with abundance only, but with affluence. His “ barns are filled with plenty, and his “ presses burst with new wine.” Another long outlives the rest of his family, only to languish under disease, and to struggle

^d Prov. xxii. 2.
^g Psal. xxxi. 15.

^e Deut. viii. 14, 17, 18.
^h Acts xvii. 26.

^f Eccles. ix. 11.
ⁱ Job xxi. 23—25.

with the most abject poverty. He is singled out as an example of what almighty power can accomplish, in supporting under the severest pressure of affliction. At his expense, the Supreme Disposer teaches other Christians, what he has a right to do with them, if he pleases.

If we compare the situation of the wicked with that of the righteous, we must often observe, that the former enjoy a far greater share of prosperity than the latter. It is impossible, at any rate, to judge of a man's state for eternity from his external circumstances. For "the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God: no man knoweth love or hatred, by all that is before them. All things come alike to all, there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked, to the good, and to the clean, and to the unclean."^k While this ordination is an argument for a future state of retribution, it at the same time bears a striking impress of divine sovereignty.

18. If we attend to the dispensations of his providence with respect to the *kingdoms of this world*, we perceive the same character, only on a larger scale. Nations are disposed of in the same manner as individuals. God raises up a nation from small beginnings, gives it power and extent of dominion, brings it to the zenith of its glory, and at length hurls it into destruction. His sovereign pleasure is that awful die by which the fate of empires is determined. It is he who "speaks concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it." To him it equally belongs to "speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it." What the heathen fabled concerning their Neptune, is true of our God. He "sitteth upon the flood," whether natural or political. "The Lord sitteth King for ever." Indeed, we may still perceive the operation of second causes, in one shape or another. Wisdom and valour are means of aggrandizement. Luxury, pride, and the counsels of folly, conspire to accomplish the fall of a nation. But these secondary causes are pre-ordained, managed, and overruled by God, for the fulfilment of his own purposes. So strongly was Babylon fortified, that it does not appear that Cyrus could have taken it in the ordinary way of attack. But the watchmen neglected to shut the gates on that night in which Belshazzar made his feast; when, as would seem, dissipation had diffused its influence over the whole city. This secondary cause, however, the negligence of the watchmen, was immediately under the direction of God. For, several hundred years before, he had said; "The gates shall not be shut."^m Nebuchadnezzar was one of those arrogant worms who vie with God for the honour of sovereignty.—He flattered himself, in consequence of his extensive conquests, that it was *his* prerogative to dispose of kingdoms, and of nations. But God, to teach this

^k Eccles. ix. 1, 2.

^l Jer. xviii. 7, 9.

^m Isa. xlv. 1.

haughty monarch that the work was wholly his own, levels him with the brute creation ; and as he declares the awful event before it takes place, he at the same time informs Nebuchadnezzar, that it was the design of this judgment, that he might “ know that “ the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to “ whomsoever he will.”ⁿ

19. As sovereignty is the attribute of our Lord Jesus Christ, he displays it in the management of his *spiritual kingdom*. He selected three disciples from the rest to be witnesses of his glorious transfiguration.^o The same disciples also had the distinguishing honour of witnessing his great humiliation.^p The rest had no right to say to him, Wherefore is this distinction ? They could not accuse him of partiality. For he may dispense his favours to whomsoever he will.—He wrought miracles, as the fruit of his sovereign pleasure. When the leper came to him, saying, “ Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean ;” he acknowledged the justness of the ascription, and in confirmation of it accomplished his cure. He replied, “ I will ; be thou clean.”^q Now, as all the miracles which Christ wrought on the bodies of men, are signs of the miracles of grace which he works on their souls ; the analogy is lost, if he is not equally sovereign in the latter. Is the removal of the bodily leprosy a symbol of the cure of the more fatal leprosy of sin ? And can the latter be the fruit of the sinner’s will, while the former depends on the will of God ?

Christ sovereignly dispenses *gifts* to his Church, whether ordinary or extraordinary. “ He gave some, apostles ; and some, prophets ; and some, evangelists ; and some, pastors and teachers.”^r A pastor had no right to complain that he was not an evangelist ; nor an evangelist, that he was not endowed with the gifts of a prophet ; nor a prophet, that he had not an apostolic mission. For saith the apostle ; “ Unto every one of us is given “ grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ ;”^s that is, just as he is pleased to give. Elsewhere this is attributed to the sovereign dispensation of the Spirit of Christ. “ To one is “ given by the Spirit, the word of wisdom ; to another the word “ of knowledge by the same Spirit ; to another the working of “ miracles ; to another prophecy ; to another discerning of “ spirits ; to another divers kinds of tongues ; to another the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and “ the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. “ —Now hath God set the members, every one of them in the “ body, as it pleased him.—And God hath set some in the Church, “ first apostles, secondarily prophets,”^t &c.

The Head of the Church displays the same sovereignty in regard to that measure of *success* which he gives his servants in his

ⁿ Dan. iv. 30—32.

^o Mat. xvii. 1.

^p Chap. xxvi. 36, 37.

^q Chap. viii. 2, 3.

^r Eph. iv. 11.

^s Ver. 7.

^t 1 Cor. xii. 8—11, 18, 28.

work. It has been often seen, that the most able and laborious have had reason to complain that they "have laboured in vain;" while those, who have not equalled them in either of these respects, have been far more successful. A schismatical spirit early discovered itself in the Church. One preferred Paul to Apollos; another, Apollos to Paul; and a third, Cephas to both. Their pretence for such a preference, was the benefit they had received by the ministry of one or other of these. But the apostle shows the folly of such conduct, from a consideration of the sovereignty of God, as the only reason of the success of his servants. "Who is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye "believed, even as the Lord *gave* to every man? I have planted, "Apollos watered; but God *gave* the increase. So then, neither "is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but "God that *giveth* the increase."^u

20. God often displays his justice in giving up men to *obduracy* of heart. But this is also represented as the effect of his sovereignty. While he "hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, "whom he will he hardeneth."^v I do not immediately speak of that hardening which respects the eternal state, but of that only which has a reference to temporal calamities. This, as we have formerly seen, is the ultimate reason given for the conduct of the Canaanites, in not making peace with Israel. With respect to the two sons of Eli, we are informed that "they hearkened not "unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay "them."^w When the Israelites applied to Rehoboam for a redress of grievances, he refused it; and the matter is thus accounted for, in the language of inspiration; "Wherefore the "king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from "the LORD, that he might perform his saying, which he spake "by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat."^x In our meditations on the divine influence on the hearts of men, we must still remember that the moral evil of their actions proceeds solely from themselves. But it is evident that the passages quoted, if they have any meaning at all, express such an operation, on the part of God, as renders the event absolutely certain. Although the manner of this operation, in its whole compass, be inconceivable to us, we cannot deny the truth of it, without denying that divine revelation is to be understood according to the ordinary sense of language.

It may be observed, lastly, that some of the most severe *judgments* that have ever been inflicted on men, have been expressly inflicted for their *denial* of divine sovereignty. This, as we have seen, was the cause of the unexampled punishment of Nebuchadnezzar. But he is by no means a singular instance. What was it that so greatly provoked the LORD in the conduct of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram? Wherefore did he "make a new

^u 1 Cor. iii. 5—7.
^x 1 Kings xii. 15.

^v Rom. ix. 18.

^w 1 Sam. ii. 25.

"thing," by causing "the earth to open her mouth, and swallow them up" that they should "go down quick into the pit?"^y Was it because they merely found fault with Moses and Aaron? No. It was because they dared to dispute the divine sovereignty, in *choosing* these persons to the offices assigned them. They said to Moses and Aaron, "Ye take too much upon you, seeing 'all the congregation are holy every one of them.'" What did Moses reply? "To morrow the LORD will shew who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him: even *him whom he hath chosen* will he cause to come near unto him."^z The LORD knew that the murmurings of these rebels, although immediately directed against Moses and Aaron, were ultimately levelled against his own sovereign ordination. Therefore he says, "It shall come to pass, that the man's rod whom I shall choose shall blossom: and I will make to cease *from me* the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmur *against you*."^a Sennacherib was only the ax, the saw, the rod and the staff in God's hand. This instrument, however, presumed to deny the Supreme Agent. The king of Assyria claimed the work as his own. He said, "By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom: for I am prudent." But observe how his conduct is described by JEROMAN, and how he determines to punish it. "Shall the ax boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood. Therefore shall the LORD, the LORD of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness, and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire. And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame: and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day."^b He trusted in the strength of his army, and this prophecy refers to its sudden and miraculous destruction.^c But this was not all his punishment. It is farther expressed in this emphatic language; "because thy rage against me, and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way that thou camest."^d Formerly he was represented as a mean instrument in the hand of the Almighty. Now, because of his refractoriness, he appears as a wild beast, bridled and muzzled by his owner, and driven whithersoever he will.

In a word, the punishment of those who have enjoyed the gospel, seems, in a peculiar manner, to turn on this hinge. The enemies of the King are those "who would not that he should reign over them."^e All, indeed, who refuse to obey the law, or to submit to the gospel, in whatever way, are the enemies of Christ. But those especially deserve this character, who deny the sovereignty

y Num. xvi. 30.

z Ver. 3, 5.

a Chap. xvii. 5.

b Isa. x. 15—17.

c Chap. xxxvii. 36.

d Ver. 29.

e Luke xix. 27.

of his will. For the right of dispensing his gifts to whom, and in what manner he pleases, of doing according to his will in heaven and in earth, is that branch of his prerogative which eminently entitles him to the designation of "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

From what has been observed on this subject, we are taught the *reasonableness* of *submitting* to the divine *will*. God is the Supreme Potter, and has an undoubted right to do with the clay as he pleases. Whatever he does, he does it with his own.

We may also perceive the *wisdom* of this submission. For "who hath resisted his will." He "worketh, and no one can let him." A sinner may spurn and toss at divine sovereignty; but it is only as "a wild bull in a net." It is impossible that he can "flee out of his hand." The preceding illustrations assure us that the impotent creature must eventually submit. Like the king of Babylon, he may find it necessary to confess this attribute, from that conviction which is the fruit of bitter experience. For God "will do all his pleasure."

A due attention to divine sovereignty affords *consolation* under the greatest adversities. The Christian has still reason to rejoice, but nothing happens to him by chance, or merely by the will of man. He may have reason to blame himself, or to blame others, as secondary causes. But he knows that he must not rest here, lest he should seem to reflect on the First Cause. How much soever he may regret any adverse event, he discerns the propriety of submission. For he knows that he might as well think of plucking the sun out of the firmament, as of counteracting any of the determinations of that God whose "counsel shall stand." The tidings delivered by Samuel to Eli must have been afflicting beyond conception. Yet this is all his answer; "It is the Lord" "let him do what seemeth him good."^f When Paul declared his intention of going up to Jerusalem, Agabus, by the spirit of prophecy, assured him, that in this case he should be delivered bound into the hands of the Gentiles. On this prediction, the disciples besought him with tears, that he would relinquish his design. But when they found that he persisted in it, they "ceased; saying, The will of the Lord be done."^g They perceived by his firmness, as connected with the prophetic warning of Agabus, that his mind was under a superior influence. Above all, it affords consolation to the Christian, that this irresistible will is that of a Father, who can do him no injury, who will assuredly make all things work together for his good. Thus, when we pray that his "will may be done," we are commanded to view him as "our Father."

This doctrine gives us an affecting view of our own *meanness* in the sight of God. We see the Supreme Agent, in his sove-

^f 1 Sam. iii. 18.

^g Acts xxi. 10—14.

reign dispensation, treating men as "dust and ashes." Good reason have we therefore to abase ourselves at his foot-stool, to entertain the most humiliating thoughts of all that we are and possess, and to join in the confession of Nebuchadnezzar : "All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing." Whence proceeded this language so different from what he once held ? Merely from a view of divine sovereignty as wonderfully exemplified on himself.

We also learn the necessity of humble *adoration*. "With God is terrible majesty : " and it eminently appears in this, that "he giveth not account of any of his matters."

In fine, we might safely conclude, that the sovereignty of God could not but signally *appear* in the work of our *redemption*, even although it were less expressly revealed. We perceive this character indelibly impressed on the works of nature. It is the turning hinge of the whole work of Providence. What is this, but a continued execution of the sovereign and immutable will of JEHOVAH ? Is not the whole history of mankind a commentary on this perfection ? Can we suppose, then, that there is a thick veil thrown over it, in the greatest of all the works of God ? The kingdoms of this world have only been monumental pillars for recording its glory. Many of them lie in ruins. But the legend is perfectly distinct. As it was written in their elevation, it is equally written in their fall. This divine character eminently appears in the typical kingdom of Israel ; in its formation, and in its administration. And is it lost in the antitype ? Is that kingdom which shall never have an end, and which shall break down every thing that opposes it, the only one in which this unalienable attribute of its Sovereign is not discernible ? Those who entertain this idea, have a very different view of matters from that illustrious minister of this kingdom, the apostle Paul : "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." Their ideas of this kingdom run directly counter to those of the glorious Sovereign, who thus addresses the Father : "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes. Even so, Father ; for so it seemed good in thy sight."

SECTION IX.

Of Divine Providence.—General Observations.—A Particular Providence proved, from the Means employed by God ;—from the Concatenation of Circumstances ;—the Season of Operation ;—the Discovery of Secret Sin ;—the Resemblance between Sin and Punishment ;—the Choice of Instruments for punishing Iniquity ;—the Circumstances of Punishment ;—Events of a Contingent Nature.

WE have already seen, that the sacred volume contains an history of Providence. This includes so great a variety of particulars, that, in so short a sketch as that designed in this work, I can scarcely enter on it. But as the subject is of the greatest importance, it may not be improper to take notice of a few things with respect to the doctrine of Providence in general ; and also briefly to shew, that this providential operation is of a most particular nature.

I shall, *first*, make a few observations with respect to Providence in general.

1. The Providence of God is merely the execution of his eternal and unalterable *purpose*, as to all those creatures which he hath brought into being. As the God of Providence, “ his kingdom ruleth over all.—The eyes of all things wait upon him.” Whether his operation respect men or angels, individuals or kingdoms ; whatsoever he doth, it is for the completion of his eternal and immutable will of purpose. “ He *doth* according to his *will* in the “ army of heaven ; and among the inhabitants of the earth.”^h—He “ worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.”ⁱ When the ten tribes had withdrawn from their allegiance to the house of David, and the men of Judah and Benjamin were assembled to fight against them, “ to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam,” they received this warning from God ; “ Ye shall not go up, nor “ fight against your brethren the children of Israel : return every “ man to his house, for the thing is *from me*.”^k

2. The inspired history of providential operation discovers the true *cause* of human *prosperity*. Men greatly err on this subject. If, either as individuals, or in a collective capacity, they enjoy the smiles of prosperity ; they generally consider these as the fruit of their own exertions. They say, “ Mine own arm hath “ gotten me all this wealth.” They arrogate the honour of that Babylon they have built, to “ the might of their power ;” although as its name is, it often eventually proves their *confusion*. Where a natural man would have discerned no other cause but human prudence in complying with a favourable proposal, the pious steward of Abraham’s house perceived and acknowledged the hand of

^h Dan. iv. 35.

ⁱ Eph. i. 11.

^k 1 Kings xii. 21—24.

God. "The LORD," said he, "hath prospered my way." We may remark, indeed, that those are most likely to observe the divine operation consequentially, who are sincerely concerned to acknowledge God in all their ways, and previously to seek a display of his hand. Such was the conduct of this excellent servant. He was eager to know "whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not." He accordingly remarked the various steps of Providence ; his being led in the right way to the house of his master's brethren, the appearance of Rebekah, the exact correspondence between her language and conduct, and what had previously been the matter of his prayer : and on all these accounts he blessed the LORD God of his master Abraham. This is truly a most beautiful, interesting and instructive history. It contains a striking picture of the character, and a practical demonstration of the worth, of a faithful messenger ; who, while he zealously served man, had his eye principally directed to God.

We learn whence Joseph "was a prosperous man." This is the reason assigned ; "The Lord was with him." The hand of God is sometimes so very evident in this respect, that it is observed even by unrenowned men, or by such as are strangers to divine revelation. Laban made this acknowledgment to Jacob ; "I have learned by experience, that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake."^m Potiphar, Joseph's master, "saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand."ⁿ

Because the event depends on divine Providence, means are not therefore to be neglected. For in this, as in his other operations, God is pleased to put honour on these. But while diligent in the use of lawful means, we must wholly depend on God for the success. For his blessing alone can make them effectual.

3. We must also discover the *cause of adversity*. We find that affliction riseth not out of the ground ; that trouble springeth not from the dust ; that this evil never exists, "and the LORD hath not done it." By the Sacred History, we are taught to acknowledge the hand of God in every species of adversity. Even in those things which are viewed as the common accidents of life, we are directed to the supreme cause. While every thing prospers with one, another is thwarted in all his undertakings, and eventually oppressed with poverty. Hannah, in her song of praise, unravels this mystery. "The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich : he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory : for the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and he hath set the world upon them."^o

^k Gen. xxiv. 42—48, 56.

ⁿ Chap. xxxix. 3, 28.

^l Chap. xxxix. 2.

^o 1 Sam. ii. 7, 8.

^m Chap. xxx. 27.

God hath never meant that the dispensations of his Providence should be viewed as a certain test of his love or hatred. In this respect it is said that "one event happeneth to all." We accordingly find, that prosperity is often showered on the wicked, whom the LORD hateth; while the objects of his eternal and unalterable love are visited with severe affliction. At the same time it appears from particular instances, that even temporal prosperity is sometimes meant as a token of God's approbation of the conduct of persons or nations, while adversity hath a contrary language. Concerning Uzziah king of Judah it is said, that "as long as he sought the LORD, God made him to prosper."^q We have many proofs that righteousness alone "exalteth a nation." The children of Israel still prospered, while they adhered to their God: and when they returned to him, after their apostacies, he still delivered them.

In many instances, we cannot certainly know the design of affliction with respect to individuals. For in this respect, as has been formerly observed, the LORD often displays his sovereignty; or he severely chastises, because he hath a secret purpose of love, and hath determined to make the greatest afflictions "work together for good." But the design is often expressly declared in Scripture, or, as may be seen afterwards, most clearly expressed in the peculiar nature of the dispensation. As to national calamities, we are left in no hesitation. Sin is still pointed out as the procuring cause.

We learn that "fire and hail, snow and vapour, stormy wind, fulfil his word."^q But the general doctrine is illustrated by many particular instances. The cities of the plain were destroyed by fire from the LORD. "Fire and hail" were among the plagues of Egypt.^r Hailstones were the instruments of divine vengeance against the Amorites, when their five kings gathered their forces against Gibeon.^s When God "causeth his vapours to ascend," he "proclaims liberty to the pestilence."^t When he blows with his wind, "his enemies sink as lead in the mighty waters."^u When the earth opens her mouth, and like a cruel mother devours her own brood; whatever be the influence of secondary causes, we are taught to view this awful calamity as a visitation for sin.^v When God "calls for famine," or "turneth the fruitful land into barrenness, it is for the wickedness of them that dwell therein."^w Men may philosophically descant on the rise and fall of empires. They may ascribe these to accident, or to causes merely of a political nature. But although there is a subordinate operation of secondary causes, we are assured from the word of God, that these events must be ultimately ascribed to his operation as "the Governor among the nations." We must not, indeed, lose sight of divine sovereignty. But we

^q 2 Chron. xxvi. 5.

^t Jer. xxxiv. 17.

^q Ps. cxlviii. 8.

^u Exod. xv. 10.

^r Exod. ix. 3.

^v Isa. xxix. 6.

^s Josh. x. 11.

^w Ps. cvii. 34.

do not recollect an instance in which the overthrow of rulers, or the desolation of kingdoms, is not represented as immediately the effect of vengeance for sin. As it is God who "putteth down one, and setteth up another," the reason is thus assigned ;—"For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup, and the wine is red ; it is full of mixture, and he poureth out of the same : but the dregs thereof all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them."^x When God gave a commission to Israel to exterminate the nations of Canaan, it was, as has been seen, because of their atrocious iniquity. Therefore did "the land itself vomit out her inhabitants."^y It was not so much the power of the Persians, as the guilt of the Babylonians, that overthrew their extensive empire. The holy and just God had said ; "I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity ; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible."^z

Nor do we merely learn from the sacred records, that wickedness in general procures punishment from God. We have a particular account of many sins, which bring grievous calamities, or complete destruction on a people : and the fatal effects of these are illustrated by facts.

Besides unnatural lust, pride, luxury and idleness are mentioned in the bill of indictment found against Sodom, and referred to by the Supreme Judge for alarming Jerusalem : "Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom. Pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and her daughters ;—therefore I took them away as I saw good."^a Similar is the charge exhibited against Tyrus and her prince. "Take up a lamentation for Tyrus, and say unto Tyrus, O thou that art situate at the entry of the sea, which art a merchant of the people for many isles, Thus saith the LORD God, O Tyrus, thou hast said, I am of perfect beauty.—Say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the LORD God, Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a god, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas.—Behold, therefore, I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations : and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness. They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the death of them that are slain in the midst of the seas."^b

Carnal confidence is a sin nearly connected with those already mentioned : and is pointed out in Scripture as hastening the destruction of a people. Moab trusted in her works, and in her treasures ; therefore she was taken, and the spoilers came upon every city.^c Not to mention a variety of other iniquities, un-

^x Psal. lxxv. 7, 8.
^a Ezek. xvi. 49, 50.
^c Jer. xlviii. 7, 8.

^y Lev. xviii. 25.
^b Chap. xxvii. 2, 3 ; xxviii. 2, 7, 8.
^z Isa. xlii. 11.

cleanness, pride, luxury, and carnal confidence, are eminently chargeable against Britain as a nation : and when we consider both the threatenings, and the examples of God's severity recorded in Scripture, we have great reason to be afraid of his judgments. Our guilt is far more aggravated than that of Moab, of Tyre, or even of Sodom ; because of our unspeakably superior privileges.

The plagues of Egypt, and the destruction of Pharaoh with his host proclaim the danger of unbelief, and of hardening our hearts against the testimony of God. They at the same time display his holy jealousy with respect to his people, and declare the certainty of the destruction of those who continue to oppress and persecute them. The oppression of the people of God has often proved the crowning guilt of a nation, that by which the cup of her iniquity was filled, and the immediate cause of the cup of trembling being put into her hand. This was the case with Babylon. Hence this aggravated guilt is mentioned, as if it had been the only procuring cause of the destruction of this great empire. God puts this language into the mouth of his oppressed Church : " The violence done to me, and to my flesh, be upon " Babylon, and my blood upon the inhabitants of Chaldea." *d*

The inspired history of Providence affords light by which we may form a true estimate of those wars that desolate the earth. The reasons assigned for them by nations are generally doubtful, often false. They may plead the love of liberty, while the genuine principle is ambition ; or zeal for religion, while they are solely concerned about their temporal interest ; or urge the plea of self-defence, while actuated by insatiable avarice, or cruel revenge. But whatever be the motives assigned by the contending parties, or by which they are really influenced ; whatever be the causes from which war more immediately proceeds ; we certainly know, that, as permitted by God, it is a punishment inflicted on all who are engaged in it. Some have not blushed to vindicate war, as necessary to prevent the too great increase of the human species. " Wars and fightings" not only proceed from men's lusts, but are designed by the Supreme Ruler for the punishment of these. This is one of the scourges that he employs, to remind guilty man of a state of retribution. We may therefore well " be afraid of the sword ; for wrath bringeth the punishments of the sword, that we may know there is a judgment." *e*

4. The providence of God may be viewed as either common or special. His *common* providence extends to all his creatures without exception ; that which is *special*, regards rational creatures, men and angels. While men in general are the objects of his special providence, it is more peculiarly exercised towards the Church, and in a way of eminence towards all who are her

d Jer. li. 35.

e Job. xix. 29.

genuine members. The Church is described as God's husbandry ; *f* as his vineyard, which he waters every moment, which lest any hurt it, he keeps night and day.*g* While all her members enjoy a special protection, this in a far higher sense is the privilege of believers. " The eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him."*h*

But on these things I do not particularly enter. All that is further intended, is to illustrate the falsity of that idea, which is entertained by many who call themselves Christians, that divine providence is merely of a general nature. They perhaps go not so far as the Epicureans, who thought it unworthy of God to trouble himself with the affairs of men. But they make great approaches to this system : as they suppose that although God exercise some care about his creatures in general, he leaves them to the exertion of their own powers, in their actions, without any particular concurrence on his part ; that many events depend merely on chance ; and that many actions are so insignificant as not to merit his attention. In opposition to this doctrine, which in fact involves a total denial of providence, we mean to shew, from a variety of considerations.

Secondly, That providential operation is of a most particular nature, extending to all creatures, even the meanest, and to all their actions, however insignificant in themselves ; and that all these are regulated for the accomplishment of the divine purpose, and in subserviency to the divine glory.*

1. This appears from the *means* that God is pleased to employ. In the general tenor of his operation, he makes use of means. But these are often in themselves so *insignificant*, and so inadequate to the end, that we could not suppose it to be accomplished without an immediate operation on the part of God. The LORD had declared by his servant Elisha, that he would deliver Moab into the hands of the three confederate kings. But how strange were the means by which this prediction was fulfilled ! At the desire of Elisha, ditches were made in the valley in which the army of the kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom, were encamped. Against morning these were filled with water. When the Moabites arose early, the sun shone upon the water, and it appeared to them red as blood. They immediately concluded that the allied princes had turned their arms against each other. They said, " This is blood ; the kings are surely slain, and they have smitten one another ; now, therefore, Moab to the spoil. And

f 1 Cor. iii. 9.

g Isa. xxvii. 3.

h 2 Chron. xvi. 9.

* In this illustration, I almost entirely abstain from a consideration of any of those works, which may properly be viewed as miraculous ; lest it should be objected by the enemies of a particular providence, that from these we can form no just estimate of God's ordinary operation.

“when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites, so that they fled before them.”ⁱ By such unlikely means did the confederated army obtain a complete victory, and the prophecy receive its accomplishment. God is pleased to employ such contemptible means, that his almighty operation may be more clearly discerned, and that the glory of the work may redound wholly to himself.

Often he employs means, which in their own nature and tendency are directly *contrary* to the end. God had sworn to Abraham that he would multiply his seed as the sand on the seashore. Yet he casts them into the furnace of Egypt, and subjects them to severe persecution. But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied. In an extraordinary dream he revealed to Joseph his future exaltation, and the obeisance he should receive from the sons of his father. But through what a devious course must he reach the promised greatness! Only through the deepest abasement, can he attain the dignity awaiting him. He must be yet more hated of his brethren, ere he can be the object of their veneration. He must be sold as a slave, ere he can be honoured as a master. He must lose all that character and confidence that he had even as a slave, and be shut up in prison, under the imputation of one of the vilest of crimes, ere he can appear as the most distinguished personage in Egypt, next to Pharaoh. He must be more than once in danger of death, and be dead to his father, before he can be the instrument of preserving him and the church in his house. Nor was it merely the will of God that this abasement should precede his exaltation. Although in its own nature diametrically opposite, it directly led to this event. Had he not been sold by his brethren, he could never have come into Potiphar's family. Had he not been falsely accused, he would not in all probability have been cast into prison. Had not this been the case, or had he served any one but the captain of the king's guard, although accused of the same crime, most probably he would not have been cast into the king's prison, but into some ordinary one. Thus he would have had no opportunity of seeing the imprisoned officers of the court, or of being at length known to Pharaoh as an interpreter of dreams.

Providence accomplishes its end even by the *wickedness* of man. This is one of the deep things of God, that he can employ the enemies of religion in his work, make use of their corruptions for the fulfilment of his purposes, direct and overrule their conduct, and yet act in a way perfectly consistent with his own infinite holiness; the immorality of the action being wholly their own. God overruled the despicable envy of Joseph's brethren for the salvation of the Church. Their intention was wicked and cruel, but his was holy and merciful. They indeed might be said to send Joseph into Egypt, as they sold him to the Ishmaelites when on their way thither. But in all this the pious Joseph saw an

ⁱ 2 Kings iii. 21—24.

higher hand. "God sent me before you," says he to his brethren, "to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now, it was not *you* that sent me hither, but God.—As for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good." ^k Thus did he employ Pharaoh as an instrument for bringing his people to obey his call in leaving Egypt. They had been so long settled in that country, had become so attached to the carnal gratifications which it afforded, and were so contaminated with the idolatry of their neighbours, that had not Pharaoh been a cruel tyrant, they in all probability, as Moses feared, would have positively refused to comply with the call of God. They had in a manner forgotten the promise made to their fathers. But he sends the rod of persecution, to drive them out of this land of idols.

II. The same thing is evident from the wonderful *concatenation* of circumstances, which is often observable in subserviency to some great event. The various circumstances which led to the exaltation of Joseph, and to the preservation of the Church, appear as so many links in one extensive chain. Some of them are very minute, and may seem in themselves of little importance. But they are so closely connected with the predicted end, that even in these we cannot but discern the hand of an all-wise agent.—I enlarge not, however, on this proof, having illustrated it fully in another place.^l

What is the book of Esther, but an history of the wonderful steps of divine Providence for the preservation of the Church, and for giving a signal overthrow to her enemies throughout the greatest part of the known world? What a trivial circumstance paves the way for the great event, and for all those which were previously necessary in order to its accomplishment! Ahasuerus, in the midst of a drunken revel, takes one whim; and Vashti his queen acts under the influence of another. He thought fit to send for her, "to shew the people and the princes her beauty;" but she refused to go, thinking perhaps that it was inconsistent with her dignity to appear in a company of men "merry with wine." She is accordingly disgraced; and Esther, a Jewish orphan, whose lineage was unknown at courts is preferred to all the virgins. collected from the various provinces of the Persian empire, and chosen in the room of Vashti.

The choice of Esther was not the only important link in this chain. There was another, not less necessary. This was the advancement of Haman, also a stranger, and an hereditary enemy of the whole Jewish nation. The king "set his seat above all the princes that were with him." The most prominent feature in the character of this Amalekite was pride. Had not his pride been hurt, the wisdom and power of God would not

^k Gen. xlv. 7, 8.; 1. 20.

^l Sermons on the Heart, Vol. i. p. 444, 445.

have been displayed in the deliverance of his people. The king had commanded that all his servants should bow and do reverence to Haman. Mordecai, the Jew, Esther's cousin, was the only one at the court of Persia who would not give Haman the commanded reverence ; most probably because it was of such a kind, as in his judgment belonged to God alone. The injured pride of Haman, like a cankered sore, swelled into the most cruel resentment. He thought it below his dignity to single out Mordecai as his victim. Nay, it seemed a revenge unworthy of his greatness, that this puny offender should be the only sufferer. He determined to glut his resentment, by making a sacrifice of the whole Jewish nation. The bloody, the irrevocable edict was accordingly passed, and transmitted by express to all the provinces, that the Jewish name might become extinct in one day.

Even after the edict was published, the adversary of the Jews could have no enjoyment of his greatness, as long as Mordecai sat in the king's gate. Haman thought, perhaps, that this dreadful edict might have a little tamed the spirit of Mordecai. But he still "moved not for him." He therefore changes his resolution ; and determines to anticipate his revenge, as to this obnoxious individual. He could not rest, therefore, till he got a gallows made for Mordecai, on which he was to be hanged next day. But observe, how God counterplots Satan ! Now, that Haman can take rest in his bed, the king can find none. "On that night" could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring the book "of records of the chronicles ; and they were read before the king. And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door, who thought to lay hands on the king. And the king said, "What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this ?" Then said the king's servants unto him, There is nothing done "for him."^m On what a slender thread was the life of this faithful servant suspended ! Had Ahasuerus slept as usual that night, there is every reason to believe that Mordecai would have perished next day. Although the king's sleep had "fled away" from him, had he called for any entertainment but that of reading, for any other book but the records of his kingdom ; or had his servants read in any other place, but that which gave an account of the king's preservation from a conspiracy ; in all probability Haman's suit would have been granted, and his purpose fulfilled, before Esther could have heard of his scheme. For at the very time that Ahasuerus asked the question mentioned above, Haman had come into the outer court, "to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows he had prepared for him."ⁿ

How narrow the hinge on which the salvation of the whole Church turned ! This was no other than the uncertain humour of

^m Esth. vi. 1—3.

ⁿ Ver. 4, 5.

a despot. So well was Esther acquainted with this, and such reason had she to fear it, especially as she had "not been called to come in unto the king for thirty days," that when she resolved to present herself before him, she well knew that her life was at stake. Had Ahasuerus been in a fretful mood, when Esther appeared, or had he taken umbrage at her coming without being called; her fate would have been worse than that of Vashti. According to the nature of the Persian law, she must have perished; and who would then have ventured to intercede for her people?

It was the will of God, not only to defeat the designs of the wicked Haman, but to give the Church cause of triumph in the ruin of this implacable adversary. But his disgrace is deferred, till he had attained the greatest honour that could be conferred on a subject. Not only did Ahasuerus "set his seat above all the princes," but as Haman himself boasted, Queen Esther permitted no man to enter with the king to her banquet, but himself. This new honour shed a gleam of joy on his rankled heart.ⁿ But then, when he had reached the highest pinnacle of dependent greatness, he is hurled into the abyss of ruin: and it appears from the event, that the gallows, which he had prepared for Mordecai, was designed by God for himself.

Although, however, Mordecai was not only saved but exalted; although Haman was brought to destruction; there still seemed to be one insuperable obstacle to the preservation of the Church. This was the irrevocable nature of the laws of the Medes and Persians. But even this was providentially ordered and overruled for the greater triumph and security of the people of God. For had the law been otherwise, their destruction would only have been prohibited. But as the king's edict could not, according to the constitution of the empire, be expressly recalled; another was published, empowering the Jews not only to stand on their defence, but to avenge themselves on all their enemies. It was now more than two months since the former edict had been published. They had, therefore, full time to know who were their enemies, and who anxiously waited for the day of their destruction. Thus also they were seconded and supported in the lawful means they used for their own preservation, by the rulers of the different provinces; and by the destruction of those "who sought their hurt," had a foundation laid for their safety against any attempt of a similar kind, when there might be no Mordecai to manage, and no Esther to intercede for them.

From the whole it is evident, that Mordecai spoke not in the way of mere conjecture, when he said to the queen; "Who knoweth, whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"^p There was nothing miraculous in all this con-

ⁿ Esth. v. 9.

• Chap ix. 1—3.

^p Chap. iv. 14.

catenation of circumstances. But he, who can suppose that it could be wholly the effect of the operation of secondary causes, without any special operation of the first, is on the high way to atheism.

III. That this operation is of a most particular nature, frequently appears from the *season* of it. When the LORD is about to work deliverance, he often allows matters to come to extremity ; so that no rational hope can be formed from the ordinary operation of secondary causes. God had determined to deliver his ancient people from the power of the Philistines. But he would not do it, till they were reduced to a very abject state, and deprived of the ordinary means of deliverance. " In the day of battle " there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any " of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan : but with " Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found."^q The deliverance of the Jews from Babylon was an event of such importance, that for effecting it, God had purposed to overthrow the whole Chaldean empire. But it was delayed, till his people began to despair of relief, and expressed themselves in this manner ; " Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost, we are cut off " for our parts."^r God is pleased to work in this manner that the operation may be more evidently his own, and that his perfections may be more signally glorified. In consequence of such deliverances, even the heathen are made to say ; " The LORD hath " done great things for them." Can his own people refuse to add, " The LORD hath done great things for us ?"

IV. The particularity of providential operation is often manifested by the *discovery* of secret *sin*. As the eyes of God " are " upon the ways of men," as " there is no darkness, nor shadow " of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves ;"^s even in the present life he often brings to light the hidden things of darkness. From the Sacred History it appears, that long before the giving of the law, it was a divine ordinance that the widow of him who died childless should be married by his brother, or by the nearest of kin. Hence the crime of Tamar was considered as punishable with death. For she was viewed as virtually an adulteress, being reserved for the surviving brother of Er and Onan. But, in the wonderful disposal of Providence, her condemnation is overruled as the occasion of the discovery of Judah's secret iniquity with her, and also of his being brought to a conviction and confession of his guilt in withholding from her his son Shelah. When she presented Judah's bracelets, and signet, and staff, he acknowledged them, saying ; " She hath been " more righteous than I."^t So remarkable are the ways in which sin is often brought to light, that even worldly men are laid under

^q 1 Sam. xiii. 22.
^s Job xxxiv. 21, 22.

^r Ezek. xxxvii. 11,
^t Gen. xxxviii. 26.

a necessity of acknowledging the hand of God. Sometimes the transgressor is most unaccountably infatuated. All the prudence displayed in his former conduct seems at once to forsake him ; so that he acts as if he were determined to be his own accuser. At other times, the very schemes that he has devised with the greatest art for concealing his guilt, prove the occasion of a discovery. This is especially the case with respect to murder. From the days of Cain till this hour, blood hath had a loud, a powerful cry.

In this manner did the sons of Jacob interpret the language of Providence, in the treatment they met with from their unknown brother. Till then they appear to have had no compunction for their crime, which had hitherto been buried in their own breasts. But a cluster of circumstances, in their present situation, seems to have flashed conviction on their obdurate minds. They were at this time in that very land into which they had sent their brother as a slave. The ruler of it under Pharaoh accused them of not being "true men ;" and false had they been to him, and to their father. As they had formerly cast Joseph into a pit, they had themselves been all cast into prison. He refused to acquit them from the charge he had brought against them, and to deliver up the hostage he demanded, on any other condition than that of their bringing with them Benjamin, the darling of their father, and as they might imagine, the only surviving child of Rachel. Could they hear this requisition, without reflecting on their conduct towards her other son, whom they had hated, for no other reason than that which made them despair of being able to bring Benjamin,—because "his father loved him more than all his brethren?"^u They had refused to listen to all the entreaties of Joseph ; and their own, addressed to this stranger, are treated with equal disregard. It is not surprising then, that their minds were all at once struck with the same conviction, and that they spoke with one voice. "They said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us ; and we would not hear : therefore is this distress come upon us. And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child ? and ye would not hear : therefore behold also, *his blood is required.*"^v

v. Divine providence is often singularly displayed in the striking *similarity* that may be observed between *sin* and *punishment*. A great variety of examples might be given from Scripture. But I shall mention only two or three ; having already made some observations on this head, when treating of the Justice of God.

The Egyptians were "guilty of blood," in executing the iniquitous decree of Pharaoh, who commanded that all the male chil-

^u Gen. xxxvii. 4.

^v Chap. xlii. 21, 22.

dren of the Israelites should be drowned in the river Nile : and in the punishment of this guilt, the plagues of Egypt had their commencement. God turned into blood the waters of this river, which alone supplied the Egyptians with drink.^w He "gave them blood to drink, because they were worthy ;" and this judgment was a striking figure of that which should be inflicted, according to the same plan of retribution, on that antichristian body, which "spiritually is called Egypt,"^x which by her corruption has converted the precious waters of the sanctuary into blood, and has also been made "drunken with the blood of the saints."^y David had greatly sinned in the matter of Uriah. The blood of this just man called for vengeance. God, in his sovereign pleasure, dispensed with his own law, in as far as David was personally concerned. He intimated to him, that he should not die. But he was pleased to give a perpetual memorial of his displeasure in declaring that, because he had killed Uriah with the sword of the children of Ammon, the sword should never depart from his house. David had previously raised up evil against Uriah in his own house, by seducing his wife ; thus robbing the poor man of his "one little ewe lamb." For this reason God said to David, "Behold I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house." And in what manner was this threatening to be fulfilled ? The wives and concubines of David were to be defiled by his own son.^z What a strict and awful retribution have we here ! blood punished by blood, and one sin by another of the same kind, although far more aggravated, adultery by incest ! Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, coveted the property of Naaman the leper, and employed such means for obtaining it, as involved himself in the guilt of falsehood, and subjected his master to the imputation of having acted dishonourably. But in the righteous judgment of God, he is made to possess a part of the former property of Naaman, that he coveted not. He went out from the presence of his master, a leper white as snow.^a As God required the blood of righteous Naboth of the house of Ahab, there was one peculiar aggravation of the crime, which must have been recalled to the recollection of others by a circumstance attending the punishment. When Ahab determined the destruction of Naboth, at the instigation of his wicked wife, he used religion as a pretence. He proclaimed a fast, and accused the good man of blasphemy. Observe the wonderful retribution. By a similar pretence, and with no more sincerity, Jehu extended the vengeance to the whole posterity of Ahab. When about to execute it, he said to Jonadab, "Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord."^b

vi. The particular operation of Providence is often discernible in the choice of the *instruments* employed for punishing iniquity.

^w Exod. vii. 20.

^x Rev. xi. 8.

^y Chap. viii. 8 ; xvii. 6.

^z 2 Sam. xii. 9—11.

^a 2 Kings v. 27.

^b 1 Kings xxi. 6—13 ;

2 Kings x. 16.

It was the will of God to punish the cruelty of Haman, the adversary of the Jews ; but he would first humble his pride, which had set his cruelty a-working. What instrument could be so completely adapted for this end, as that Mordecai whom he hated more than any human being ? This upright Jew had used no means which could tend to the destruction of his adversary. He was merely a passive instrument ; and therefore the hand of God was more eminently seen in the whole management of this matter. What could give such a wound to the pride of Haman, who knew the great partiality of Ahasuerus for himself, as to learn that Mordecai, that contemptible Jew, whom he had condemned to the gallows, was “ the man whom the king delighted to honour ?” The command of Ahasuerus, directed to Haman, must have inflicted a still deeper wound. When Haman was asked by his master what should be done to the man whom the king delighted to honour ; as he had not the least hesitation that he was himself the favoured person, he proposed that very plan that would be most gratifying to his own pride. “ Let the royal apparel,” said he, “ be brought, which the king useth to wear, and the horse “ that the king rideth upon, and the crown-royal which is set “ upon his head. And let this apparel and horse be delivered to “ the hand of one of the king’s most noble princes, that he may “ array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honour, and “ bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall be done to the man whom the “ king delighteth to honour.” All this was Haman commanded to do to Mordecai. The conclusion that his wise men and his wife formed from this event, was soon verified in the experience of Haman. They said to him, “ If Mordecai be of the seed of “ the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not “ prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him.”

It is one strange character of the operation of God, that he often employs instruments, whom he finds it necessary to punish for the very work they have done. We have seen, that the use he makes of them is perfectly consistent with his own infinite holiness. But he punishes them, because of the wicked motives by which they have been actuated in doing his work. We have formerly referred to the severe punishment of Sennacherib. Concerning Nebuchadnezzar, a celebrated writer makes the following observations : “ We see in the person of this impious, and at the “ same time victorious king, what are those men called conquer- “ ors. They are for the most part but instruments of the divine “ vengeance. God exercises his justice by them, and then exercises it upon them.”—Judea “ totally falls, is totally destroyed “ by the divine justice, whereof Nebuchadnezzar is the minister. “ He too shall fall in his turn ; and God, who employs the hand

* of that prince to chastise his children, and pull down his enemies, reserves him for his own almighty hand."*d*

VII. The *circumstances* of punishment often demand our attention, as affording a striking proof of a particular operation. The *time* is sometimes very remarkable. God had determined to abase Nebuchadnezzar, because of his pride and vain glory. The opportunity which Providence embraced was such as signally to display divine operation ; and, at the same time, to proclaim the reason of the judgment. While the king walked in the palace of Babylon, he "spake and said, Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty ?" Every word that he utters, is fraught with arrogance and self-importance. It was folly in him to look, with such a temper of mind, on a mass of stone and lime, that might soon be converted into a heap of ruins. Not satisfied, however, with viewing the work with admiration, his thoughts break out into language. Nor does he merely say, "Is not this Babylon ?" but it must be "great Babylon." And why great ? Because Nebuchadnezzar had built it. "Is not this *great* Babylon, that *I* have built ?" as if he could impart his own fancied greatness to the work of his masons and carpenters ; or because he wished that this greatness should be reflected in the extent and splendour of his imperial city. But the end must not be forgotten ;—"built,—for the house of the kingdom," for a royal palace, for the metropolis of a great empire. By what power was all this effected ? Does he acknowledge the true God ? Does he mention even his own Bel or Nebo ? No. This proud monarch feels as if, after such a wonderful creation, he were great enough to be a god to himself :—"Great Babylon, that I have built,—by my power." This had been too feeble a mode of expression, in describing so astonishing a work. There must be a reduplication of the idea, to give a more enlarged view of his possession of this attribute. He talks in a superlative style, as if entitled to use godlike language ; "by the might of my power." And as if the end formerly mentioned,—"for the house of the kingdom," had been of itself unworthy of the dignity of the agent, or unequal to the importance of the work, he subjoins ;—"and for the honour of my majesty." Here he discovers his last, his highest end. As he speaks without any regard to God, he declares that his building such an elegant metropolis was not for the benefit or comfort of his fellow-men ; or merely, or even principally, for the honour of the kingdom of Babylon. He views the whole, only as it related to himself. The language had been arrogant enough, had he only said ;—"by my power, for my honour." But the end must be notified by the same pompous pleonasm as the means. All this is "for the honour of *my* majesty."

Let us mark the immediate consequence. "*While the word* " was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken, Thy kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field."^a He had in effect "set his mouth against the heavens:" and "there fell a voice" from that exalted throne which he had outraged by his arrogance. What a fatal blow to his impious egotism? "*To thee it is spoken.*" In the awful sentence, he is acknowledged as a king: but only to remind him, that there is one infinitely above him, who indeed "beholdeth all high things, and is a king over all the children of pride;" and to prepare him for receiving the mortifying intelligence, that his "kingdom is departed." He is not only stript of his royal power, and thrust out from his palace; but the whole extent of Babylon cannot afford him a shelter. Driven from "the house of his kingdom," he must have his "dwelling with the beasts of the field." He who had "come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan unto the habitation of the strong,"^b is not permitted, in his abasement, even to retain the character of this monarch of the forest. So low is "the honour of his majesty" brought, that he is "made to eat grass as oxen." As this sentence "fell from heaven," at the very time that "the word was in the king's mouth," how sudden was its execution! "The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar."

Similar, as to time, was the punishment of his grandson Belshazzar. In the madness of a great feast, he would make an experiment more daring than any he had ever made in his more sober moments. At his command, "they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God, which was at Jerusalem: and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them." As if the impiety of profaning the vessels consecrated to the true God had been too little, they go as far as possible to make him the minister of their abominable idolatry. They drank wine, and "they praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone." But the judgment of this ungodly prince lingered not. "*In the same hour* came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick," in the most conspicuous place of the royal apartment. And what was the writing? Although the will of God was communicated in a different manner, it was materially the same with that expressed by the voice from heaven, which was directed to his grandfather. The writing was this; "God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it."^c

Many similar instances of the sudden execution of sentence against evil works are recorded in Scripture. The Israelites demanded flesh, to satisfy their lust. God gave it, but in anger:

^a Dan. iv. 30—33.

^b Jer. li. 44.

^c Dan. v. 2—4, 26.

and to shew in the most unequivocal manner the cause of his displeasure, "while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people; and he smote them with a very great plague."^d Punishment overtook both Ananias and his wife Sapphira, as soon as they had sinned.^e Of the same kind was the judgment of king Herod. No sooner was his heart fly-blown with pride, than he became a prey to worms. He cordially accepted the base adulation of the people, when they impiously said, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost."^f

The *place* of punishment is often very remarkable. When Ahab caused the just Naboth to be murdered, God declared, that where dogs had licked Naboth's blood, dogs should also lick the blood of Ahab; and that they should eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel, that is, the very field that had belonged to Naboth.^g How strictly was this fulfilled! Ahab having been mortally wounded in battle, while in his chariot; when his body was brought to Samaria, "one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria, and the dogs licked up his blood."^h About twenty-four years afterwards, when Jehu assumed the royal authority, he commanded that Jezebel should be thrown down from a window of the palace. After he had spent some time in refreshing himself, thinking perhaps that he had treated her with too much indignity, he commanded that she should be buried, as being a king's daughter. But when they went to bury her, "they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands." It is evident, from the history, that in this instance Jehu had no design to co-operate in the confirmation of prophecy. For till he received this information, he had no recollection of the sentence pronounced against her. Then indeed it recurred on his mind. "They came again, and told him: and he said, This is the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, *In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel: and the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field, in the portion of Jezreel*, so that they shall not say, 'This is Jezebel.'"ⁱ As little was it from any preconcerted design on the part of Jehu, that the descendants of Ahab were killed in the very place where the blood of Naboth had been wickedly shed. "Joram, king of Israel, and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot, and they went out against Jehu, and met him in the *portion of Naboth the Jezreelite*."^k It is remarkable indeed, that the vengeance threatened was brought on the house of Ahab, at the very time that the king of Judah was on a visit to Jeroboam; that he might partake of the punishment,

^d Num. xi. 33.

^g 1 Kings xxi. 19, 23.

^k Ver. 21.

^e Acts v. 1—10.

^h Chap. xxii. 38.

^f Chap. xii. 22, 23.

ⁱ 2 Kings ix. 30—35.

as being a descendant of the wicked Ahab. Joram, having been wounded in battle against the Syrians at Ramah, it was providentially ordered that he should go to Jezreel, rather than to Samaria, to be healed of his wounds. Thither, his cousin Ahaziah had come to see him, because he was wounded.^l There is no evidence that Jehu fixed on this time, from a wish to include the king of Judah in the punishment of the house of Ahab. It does not even appear, that Jehu knew of Ahaziah's being then at Jezreel. But all was the result of the immutable purpose of God, and accomplished by a wonderful operation of his Providence. "The destruction of Ahaziah *was of God*, by coming to Joram : "for, when he was come, he went out with Jehoram against Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to cut off "the *house of Ahab.*"^m In like manner, it was the will of God, that the sons of his brethren, to the number of forty-two, should come from Jerusalem to Samaria, at this very time, on a visit to the children of Ahab, who resided there, that they might be included in the common fate of that devoted family.ⁿ

VIII. I shall only add, that the truth of what we have asserted appears from those events which are of a *contingent* nature. Events may be called fortuitous or contingent with respect to men, as not being influenced by human foresight, or depending on such an operation of secondary causes that the result can be matter of rational expectation. But none of these can be viewed as contingent with respect to God. As they are all certainly foreknown to him, they are all disposed and directed by his Providence. Although the issue of the lot, if fairly managed, depends not on human skill, and lies beyond the reach of human foresight ; yet we have various instances of its being so regulated by God, as clearly to declare his overruling providence, and to proclaim his will : as in the case of Achan,^o of Saul,^p of Jonathan,^q and of Jonah.^r The unnatural sons of Jacob had formed no fixed plan as to the manner in which they were to dispose of their brother Joseph. His being sold, rather than suffered to perish in a pit, was a mere contingency to them. Not less so was the appearance of the Ishmaelites at this time. Of the same nature was the circumstance of his becoming the slave of Potiphar. But although these things were contingent to them, they were necessary according to the eternal purpose ; and all managed, as we have already seen, by a particular providence. Ahab received his death entirely in a fortuitous way, as far as man was concerned. But, as was foretold by Micaiah, it was the decree of the Most High that he should fall that day. He used every precaution for the preservation of his life. He disguised himself, that he might be unknown in battle ; while he ungenerously asked of Jehoshaphat to appear in his royal apparel, and thus expose him-

^l 2 Kings viii. 29.

ⁿ 2 Kings x. 11—14 ; 2 Chron. xxi. 17.

^p 1 Sam. x. 21. ^q Chap. xiv. 42.

^m 2 Chron. xxii. 7.

^o Josh. vii. 16—18.

^r Jonah i. 7.

self to the danger he wished to avoid. He also entered the field in complete armour. The thirty-two Syrian captains, at the command of their sovereign, employed the utmost diligence to discover Ahab; but, as would appear, in vain. "A certain man," however, "drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness."^s There is no evidence that this was one of the captains, appointed to search for Ahab. This archer shot without any particular aim. For he "drew a bow in his simplicity," as the words literally signify, having no apprehension that he would hit the king of Israel. But the arrow was directed by the divine hand, to the very spot in Ahab's armour by which an arrow might enter, and where he might receive a mortal wound.

The doctrine of a particular providence is fraught with consolation. What reason have we to rejoice, that nothing in our lot can be the effect of mere chance; that every thing which befalls us "cometh from the LORD, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working;" and that even those events which may be accidental to us, are all the effect of infinite wisdom, and produced by the unerring operation of almighty power!

Let us still regard and acknowledge the operation of his hand. Do we enjoy prosperity? Let us remember, that it is God alone who maketh rich or great. Are we visited with adversity? We may derive comfort from this consideration, that "affliction riseth not out of the ground, and that trouble springeth not from the dust." Are we indebted to any of our fellow men as benefactors? Let us not return ingratitude for their kindness. But, least of all, let us forget the God of our mercy. Well may we imitate the conduct of Ezra, who, while he acknowledged the kindness of Artaxerxes, especially remarked the divine hand; saying, "Blessed be the LORD God of our fathers, who hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart."^t Do we suffer unjustly from others? Although we have given them no provocation, we may well say, "Is there not a cause?" Have we not, times and ways without number, provoked that just and holy God, who has an indisputable right to employ whom he will as the instruments of his displeasure? Let us imitate the conduct of David, who, when Shimei the Benjamite reviled and cursed him without a just reason, said to those who were eager to take vengeance on this worthless man, "Let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD hath bidden him."^u

Justly mayest thou, O Christian, take comfort from this precious doctrine. That God in whom "all live, and are moved, and have their being," who "giveth life and breath, and all things," is thy God. Thou art not only, in common with others, under the direction of a particular providence, in all thy ways: but to

^s 1 Kings xxii. 34.

^t Ezra vii. 27.

^u 2 Sam. xvi. 11.

thee it is wholly a providence of love. All the ways of the LORD thy God are truth and mercy. They are all truth, as exactly corresponding with his gracious promise ; and all mercy, as directly tending to its full accomplishment. He does not merely compass thy path, and thy lying down ; but he still surrounds thee with his favour, as with a shield. Thy severest adversities “work together for good.” The ways of thy God may now seem covered with darkness. But in a little thou shalt see, that they have been all “prepared as the morning.” Wait, therefore, on the LORD thy God. Commit thy way to him, and he will bring it to pass. “Many sorrows shall be to the wicked : but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.”

SECTION X.

The Natural Depravity of Man.—Example insufficient to account for the Symptoms or Universality of Human Corruption.—This proved to be Natural, from its Early appearance ;—from the History of Seth ;—from the Names given to the Antediluvian Patriarchs ;—from the Death of Children ;—from the Circumstances which allude to the Manner in which Sin is transmitted.

WE have already taken a cursory view of human depravity ; of its rapid progress and almost universal dominion, of its influence on the heart, and of its fatal effects. Let us now trace this to its origin ; and it will appear that man is indeed “a transgressor from the womb.” From the nature of this work, it would be improper to introduce those proofs that are merely of a doctrinal kind : and I shall not even call the attention of the reader to all the historical evidence which the Scripture affords. The doctrine of our original corruption might be proved, from the nature of that federal transaction into which God entered with man in a state of innocence ; from the covenant being made with Adam before the formation of Eve, although it included her as well as her husband, and on the same principle, the posterity of both ; from the curse pronounced on the ground, *for the sake of man*, which undoubtedly affects the descendants of Adam, no less than it did himself ; from the circumstance of his calling his wife Eve, that is, “the mother of all living,” not immediately after God had blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply,” nor while they continued in a state of integrity, but after the fall. This, as it clearly shews his persuasion that all those of her posterity who should in a spiritual sense deserve the name of *living*, should be made alive by virtue of that Seed, who, according to the promise, was to spring from her ; at the same time testifies his conviction that they should all by nature be under the sentence of spiritual and eternal *death*. Without entering into a particular

consideration of these, and of several other proofs of the same kind, I shall confine myself to a few of a different description.

1. It is plain from Scripture-history, that the corruption of man proceeds not merely, or chiefly, from *example*. Imitation is indeed a powerful principle in our nature ; but it cannot produce all the effects which have been ascribed to it. If there be no corrupt bias in the heart of man, the principle of imitation must, where circumstances are equal, have equal effects, although of an opposite kind. It must operate as powerfully in following a good, as an evil, example. But how far this is from being the case, let the experience of mankind declare.

The crime of Cain was not only heinous in itself, but highly aggravated. It was not merely murder, one of the most horrid crimes that can be perpetrated by man, but fratricide ; and fratricide committed under the form of persecution for righteousness' sake. Abel had given no provocation to his brother. He had trampled on no law human or divine. He had not directed a single word of reproach against Cain. But " he slew him, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous."^v He committed this crime in the very face of God, after being favoured with an immediate revelation, warning him of his duty, and encouraging him by a promise of acceptance, as well as of dominion over his brother.^w

The wickedness of Cain could not proceed from imitation : for he was the first murderer. It could not be the effect of a gradual progress in guilt, in consequence of a long course of personal iniquity, or the influence of example in a long succession of ages. Although the first man born of woman, he was as wicked as any who have since existed. He went as far as he possibly could, according to the nature of his sin ; and we can scarcely form the idea of one more horrid. His guilt was further aggravated by subsequent arrogance, obduracy, and impiety.

New modes of sinning may be devised, in consequence of the exercise of man's fertile invention in the service of Satan. But these are only varied operations of the same corrupt principle. Or sin may become more general, from the influence of example and persuasion. The *ways* of man may become more flagitious ; but the principle in the *heart* is continually evil.^x

It may be said perhaps, that the example of Abel, although in the same family, affords a proof that the corruption of Cain was not hereditary. But let it be observed, that we find nothing in the history of Cain, which distinguishes him as naturally a worse man than his brother. It was only " in process of time," when he presented an offering to the LORD, that the wickedness of his heart appeared. We are informed indeed that Abel was right-

^v 1 John iii. 12.

^w Gen. iv. 7.

^x Chap. vi. 5, 12. comp.

eous, while the character of Cain was quite the reverse. But did the righteousness of Abel originate from a better nature, or from the exercise of his own powers? No; "by faith he offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous."^y Now, as "faith is not of ourselves, but is the gift of God;" this clearly shews that righteousness was not more natural to Abel than to his brother, but given him from above.

Such is the *universality* of this corruption, that we must necessarily conclude that it is born with us. Were not man naturally corrupt, it is inconceivable that in the course of only nine generations from Adam, corruption should be so universal, that only one man should be found righteous in the whole world; and so great, as to exhaust the long-suffering of the God of mercy; especially when we consider the longevity of the patriarchs; the consequent opportunity afforded to their posterity of being instructed with respect to the creation, the fall, and the revelation of grace; and the appearance of at least one illustrious prophet during this period. There might be some ground to plead the influence of example, did only the children of the wicked follow their ways. But we learn from Scripture, what is confirmed by observation in every age, that even the children of the most pious parents, who have been strictly educated in the ways of God, and as far as possible preserved from the company of the wicked, discover the same corrupt inclinations with others. I shall not mention the ungodly and ungodly Ham, lest it should be said that he was tainted by the wickedness of the antediluvian world. Did not Abraham receive this signal testimony from God himself? "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him; and they shall keep," or "that they may keep the way of the LORD."^z Was not Abraham separated from the world around him, separated from his own kindred? Yet there was an Ishmael in his family, a scoffer, a persecutor.^a Was not Isaac the father of that "profane person Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright!"^b So wicked were some of the sons of Jacob, that they "troubled him, to make him to stink among the inhabitants of the land."^c Two of them were guilty of incest;^d two of them were perfidious murderers; and almost all conspired against Joseph, and sold him as a slave.

II. It is evident that this depravity is natural to man, because it is ascribed to him, and actually appears in his conduct, from his *earliest years*. Here we might appeal to universal experience. Where is the parent, who, unless wonderfully blinded by self-love or prejudice, has not remarked in his children the mournful dawns of peevishness, wilfulness, disobedience, envy and resentment, almost from the womb? Who has not seen, that false-

^y Heb. xi. 4.

^b Heb. xii. 16.

^z Gen. xviii. 19.

^c Gen. xxxiv. 30.

^a Chap. xxi. 9.; Gal. iv. 29.

^d Chap. xxxv. 22.; xxxviii. 18.

hood is their natural language, as soon as they begin to speak? But we appeal to the observation of that Witness who cannot err. It is his testimony, that "the imagination of man's heart is evil *from his youth,*" or "infancy."^e It is not said that man's ways are evil, but the assertion respects his heart. Nor is it simply declared that his heart is evil; but this depravity is ascribed to the imagination of his heart; that is, to the very first signment of thought there. For in us, that is, "in our flesh," in our nature as children of Adam, "dwelleth no good thing;" and we are not "sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves."^f This corruption is not confined to years of maturity. Man is thus depraved from his very infancy. For the original word, as it is sometimes rendered childhood,^g properly denotes the whole age of man from his conception, till he arrive at the state of manhood. It is a derivative from the word which is used to signify a mere infant, and even an embryo in the womb.^h

Do we read of some, who in their early years have manifested a different propensity? We are at the same time assured that this was entirely the effect of divine grace. Thus John the Baptist was "filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb."ⁱ

III. Original depravity is evidently ascribed to that *patriarch*, who was to be the progenitor of the Messiah, as well as of the Church. It has been often observed, that the language employed by the Spirit of God, concerning the generation of Seth, deserves particular attention. "Adam—begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth." He must be wilfully blind, who, in this phraseology, observes not an obvious reference to the language used with respect to the creation of Adam, and at the same time a striking antithesis. "God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness."^k But lest the reader should overlook the contrast, because of the passage referred to being at some little distance in the history, the same language is repeated immediately before this declaration with respect to Seth: "In the day that God created man, *in the likeness of God made he him.*—And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in *his own* likeness, after *his* image."^l A very important difference is undoubtedly marked between the likeness of God and that of Adam. The likeness of Adam was that of a fallen mortal creature. Adam was now a believer, but he was a sinful man. The image of God, which he had lost by the fall, was indeed partially restored. But this was not properly *his* image: and as it was restored only by grace, it could not be communicated according to the course of nature. Adam could beget no son in his likeness, even as partially renewed. For moral rectitude can only be the effect of a new creation: and we

^e Gen. viii. 21.

^f Rom. vii. 18.; 2 Cor. iii. 5.

^g 1 Sam. xii. 2.

^h Exod. ii. 6.; Judg. xiii. 7.

ⁱ Luke i. 15.

^k Gen. i. 26.

^l Chap. v. 1, 3.

are thus created, not in the first, but in the second Adam.^m Although it had been possible, that our first parent could have communicated his image as a renewed man, still there would have been a communication of his remaining corruption ; and Seth would have inherited original sin.

The language of the Spirit of God, in this passage, forms so remarkable an antithesis to that employed concerning the creation of Adam, that the mind instantaneously and irresistibly recurs to it : and how repugnant soever to the pride of the heart, feels a secret conviction that this means something very different from being "created in" God's image, after his likeness."

This account is not given with respect to Cain, although there can be no doubt that it is equally applicable to him. But some might have indulged the vain imagination, that, when Cain received existence, sin retained more of its virulence in our first parents, than afterwards. Or, it might have been supposed, that this was peculiar to Cain, of whom it is said that he "was of that wicked one ;" and that although similar depravity had been communicated to his posterity, this had perished with them in the universal deluge. Nor is this said of Abel, who, as far as appears, left no issue. But this account is reserved for the history of that other seed, whom God appointed instead of righteous Abel. As, after the deluge, the earth was to be peopled solely by the descendants of Seth ; as the seed of the Church, nay, that seed, in which all the families of the earth should be blessed, was to spring from him ; we are taught, by the Spirit of inspiration, what judgment we ought to form with respect to the natural state of mankind in general, and even of those who are the heirs of glory.

iv. The very *names* of some of the patriarchs convey this important lesson. Among the Hebrews and other eastern nations, the names imposed on persons, either at their birth or afterwards, were always significant. They were monuments, of the most simple and familiar kind. They either denoted something singular in regard to their birth, or respected some blessing from God. Thus they were a sort of compendious history. For we must suppose, that parents were at pains to explain them to their children ; and they could not be pronounced, without the recollection of the reason of their being imposed.ⁿ

But most of the names given by the antediluvian patriarchs are confined to one affecting subject. They express the guilt and misery of our nature ; as if these good men had still looked back to the entrance of sin, and kept in their eye its deserved punishment. The name of *Abel*, as it signifies *vanity*, or "a vapour that soon vanisheth away," emphatically denoted, not merely the brevity of his life, but that of the life of man in general, who

^m Eph. ii. 10 ; Col. iii. 10. ⁿ Fleur., Mœurs des Israelites, Chap. i.

"at his best state is altogether vanity." Seth, the substitute for Abel, gave a name to his son, which exhibits man in the same melancholy point of view. "He called his name *Enos*." This signifies *sorrowful, grievously sick, miserable*. Nor was this name confined to him. Like that of *Abel*, it is extended to all men who are often called *Enos*, or *sons of Enos*, because of their spiritual sickness, their sorrow and misery. Hence the Psalmist prays, with respect to the enemies and persecutors of the Church; "Put them in fear, O Lord, that the nations may know themselves to be *Enos*, miserable men."^o *Enos* seems to have recollected the meaning of his own name, when he gave one to his son *Cainan*; for this may be rendered *mourning* or *lamentation*. The grandson of *Cainan* was called *Jared*; which may be translated *descending*, and has been understood as referring to the *descent* of the sons of God from that state of separation from the posterity of Cain, in which they had hitherto continued.^p In different places of Scripture, the same word denotes the effects of sin;—as in Jer. xlviii. 18. "Come down from thy glory:" Lam. i. 9. "She remembereth not her last end; therefore she *came down* wonderfully." The name *Methuselah* has been rendered by some, "He dies, and it is sent;" by others, "He dies, and the dart cometh." According to either translation, the name is viewed as having a prophetic reference to the deluge, which was *sent* that very year in which this good man *died*. Enoch, we know, was a prophet; and it would appear that in giving a name to his son, he foretold the flood nearly a thousand years before it came. Methuselah called his son *Lamech*, that is *poor, made low, or one who is struck*.

v. The corruption of our nature appears from the dominion which *death* hath exercised over *children*. The apostle Paul, in proving the existence of a law previous to that given from Mount Sinai, and the condemnation of men by this law, observes, "that death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression;"^q that is, over children, who had never sinned in their own persons. That death indeed reigned over these, or exercised its full power on them, is evident from the Scripture-history. Vast multitudes of children must have perished in the deluge. The destruction of the cities of the plain extended to persons of every age. Many thousands, who had never actually sinned, must have suffered in the plague of the first-born. The command of God, with respect to the extermination of the Amalekites, and other devoted nations, included children as well as adults. But, to use the language of Abraham, when interceding for Sodom and Gomorrah, as God "will not destroy the righteous with the wicked," we may be assured that the children, over whom death was permitted to

^o Psal. ix. 20. See Ainsw. on Gen. iv. 26.

^p Heidegger. *Hist. Sac.* Vol. i. Ex. vi. s. 32.

^q Rom. v. 14.

reign, were not viewed by him as *righteous*. "Who ever perished, being innocent?" They "had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." They could be viewed as guilty, therefore, only as having sinned in that common parent, who, as a public representative, "is the figure of him that is to come."^r

To pretend that the death of infants is to be considered as a mercy rather than a judgment, as taking them from the evils of this life ; is to beg the question in a very ridiculous manner, by supposing that they indiscriminately make a change to the better, or, in other words, that they must of necessity be free from future punishment, as being free from sin. This assertion also flatly denies the veracity of God in the threatening and sentence of the law : for it represents that as a blessing, which he denounces as a curse. It is equally repugnant to all the feelings of our nature. For we still view death as in itself, not a benefit, but a calamity. However great the sufferings of life, it is a very rare case, if men do not recoil from death with horror : and for reconciling the mind to it, all the consolations of religion are requisite.

vi. The Scripture-history includes a variety of circumstances which evidently allude to the *manner* in which sin is transmitted. The first dictate of shame, as felt by the parents of our race, in consequence of the entrance of sin, was to conceal those parts which are the instruments of generation. All the members of the body are employed as the instruments of unrighteousness ; but shame is especially excited by the nakedness of these ; as if God would set a special mark of dishonour on them, to remind us that in this way sin, the parent of shame, is transmitted from one generation to another ; and that the human race is continued, and sin communicated, by the very same means.

The ordinance of circumcision had a similar reference. Being a painful rite, it intimated that sin merits suffering, and that man is subjected to this by the sentence of his Judge. Was this rite performed in the way of excision ? It signified that the whole man deserves to be cut off from the fellowship of God.—From the language frequently used in Scripture, it is evident that this ceremony denoted that the heart is depraved and polluted by sin. Therefore we read of the uncircumcision of the heart, and of its being necessary that this should be circumcised by divine grace.^s As it was a seal of the covenant of grace, and of "the righteousness which is by faith ;" it respected man's condemnation by the first covenant, and proclaimed his need of justification and salvation by another. It was to be performed on the eighth day, that is, as soon as the child could be supposed able to bear it without danger, or be cleansed ; to declare that

^r Rom. v. 12, 14. comp.

^s Lev. xvi. 41. ; Jer. ix. 26. ; Deut. x. 16. ; xxx. 6.

man is corrupted, that he is subjected to suffering, that his heart is depraved, and that he needs to be regenerated and justified, even from the womb.

The hereditary curse to which woman is subjected, is a striking indication of the manner in which sin is transmitted. "Unto the woman God said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception," that is, "thy sorrow in conception ; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children."^t Had this sentence been confined to Eve herself, it might have been viewed as merely the punishment of her personal guilt. But it is entailed on her daughters. It subsists in its full force, although it is nearly six thousand years since it was pronounced. Individuals, indeed, in almost every region, from some peculiarity of frame, and even the females in general belonging to some nations, feel the effect of the latter part of this sentence in a very inferior degree, having little pain in child-bearing. But this no more forms an objection to the general law, than does the great fertility of some parts of the earth to the curse pronounced on it for the sin of man. Sorrow in *conception* and *child-bearing* is the common lot of women in every age : and for what end, but to remind mankind, in their successive generations, of the manner in which sin entered into the world ; to teach them also that they were "*conceived* in sin," and that it is impossible that "he who is *born* of a woman should be righteous?" This hereditary sorrow, which is the native fruit of sin, proclaims to the woman, every time she conceives or bears a child, that she "travaileth with iniquity, hath conceived mischief, and brings forth falsehood."

It also deserves notice, that sorrow in these respects is confined to our nature. It is unknown to all other animals, in any similar degree, except in peculiar cases, or as proceeding from some accidental cause : and such occasional diversities cannot enter into the description of the species in general.

I may add, that the atonement enjoined under the law for every woman "who had conceived seed and born a child," conveys the same instruction. She was not only to continue in a state of purification forty days, for a male-child, and eighty for a female ; but it was necessary that, when the time appointed was elapsed, she should "bring an offering, and that the priest should "make an atonement for her."^u

VII. The *miraculous conception* of our Saviour affords a strong argument in support of the doctrine under consideration. It was promised that he should be the *seed* of the *woman*.^v For had he descended from Adam in the way of ordinary generation, he must also have sinned and died in him ; and thus he could never have bruised the head of the serpent. The Messiah, indeed, could

^t Gen. iii. 16.

^u Lev. xii. 1—3.

^v Gen. iii. 15.

not himself be subjected to death by means of the first Adam ; and yet by dying procure life, as the second. As this great promise was made immediately after the entrance of sin, and just before the denunciation of the sentence on the woman, as to sorrow in conception ; with respect to the time and the connexion, merits our attention, that God proclaimed deliverance from sin by means of a deviation from the ordinary law which he had established for the propagation of our species. The curse, written in conception, and transmitted by means of it, was to be removed by a conception of so extraordinary a nature “ that a woman should “ compass a man.”^w

This “ new thing in the earth” took place, when the Virgin Mary conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost. That the Messiah might have a right to redeem us, it was necessary that he should be our near kinsman. He must be of the same stock with ourselves, that he might “ not be ashamed to call us brethren,” and that his obedience and suffering might be imputed to sinners of the same family. As this was requisite from his character as a Redeemer ; it was equally so, from the greatness of that humiliation which was necessary for our redemption. He must “ become in all things like unto us,” as far as this conformity was attainable “ without sin.” When, therefore, he assumed our nature, without the intervention of man ; we may be assured that the only reason of this difference was, that he could not otherwise assume it without being subjected to sin. While the word was really “ made flesh,” he was made only “ in the likeness of *sinful* flesh.” Accordingly, we are expressly informed, that this seed of the woman, this “ holy thing,” is called “ the “ Son of God,” in consequence of the “ Power of the Highest “ overshadowing” the Virgin.^x

What reason have we for the deepest humiliation, when we contemplate our natural state ! Well may we cry out with the leper under the law, “ Unclean, unclean !” Let us imitate the exercise of David, in his penitential Psalm, in tracing up our actual transgressions to the corrupt and bitter fountain of original sin. Let us compare our own deformity with that purity which the law requires, and in which we were created in our first father ; and this will be our language to the Searcher of hearts : “ Behold ! thou desirest truth in the inward parts ;” but “ I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive “ me.” How ill does pride become a fallen, a polluted worm ; especially in relation to infinite holiness ! Well may “ our mouth “ be stopped,” in the presence of that God, in whose sight “ the “ heavens are not clean.”

Let us beware of accusing divine justice, in entrusting our holiness and felicity in the hand of one person. Let us rather admire his mercy, in providing a remedy. Let us remember that

God hath eternally displayed and vindicated the justice of his procedure in the old covenant, by the plan he pursues in the new : and that if we obstinately deny his justice in the imputation of sin, we disclaim any interest in the imputation of righteousness. We cannot renounce our interest in the first Adam, as a representative, without at the same time renouncing all claim to the second. For "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners ; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

SECTION XI.

The Incarnation of the Son of God.—His frequent Appearance in the likeness of Man, a prelude of this.—Prefigured by the Smoking Furnace and Burning Lamp ;—the Burning Bush ;—Jacob's Ladder ;—the Cloud of Glory.—Respected in the Rights of Primogeniture ;—Law of the Levirate ;—Circumcision ;—Patriarchal Mode of Swearing ;—Abstinance from the Sinew that shrank.

JESUS CHRIST is the great subject of the Holy Scriptures. "The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus." The mystery of the incarnation of a divine person is "without controversy great." On this mystery, rests the whole doctrine, revealed in the word of God, concerning our salvation. We need not wonder then, that, while this is the subject of so many prophecies and promises, it should also have been exhibited to the faith of the Church, by various symbols and preludes ; or that it was taught, not merely in a doctrinal way, but by historical illustration.

Before entering on the consideration of what is chiefly in view, it may be necessary to observe, that the foundation of the Church's faith, as to the incarnation of a divine person, lay in the first promise. In this it was declared, that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent. The person, whose appearance is here foretold, being called the *seed* of the *woman* ; faith, in embracing the promise, must have viewed him as truly *man*. But such is the nature of the work ascribed to him, that there was an equal necessity for considering him as *God*. The old serpent had already shewn, that man could not enter the lists with him. He had deceived, and been the instrument of destroying our nature ; although he found it in a state of innocency. Now, when it is said, "It shall bruise thy head," the meaning is, that the seed of the woman should retort on himself the fatal stroke given by this destroyer ; that he should overthrow that external dominion in the world, which he had acquired in consequence of the fall ; nay, that he should subdue his power in the heart of man, by the destruction of sin, which, as it is the off-

spring of the serpent, is the great support of his kingdom. Could faith ever expect the accomplishment of such a work by any mere creature?

If any doubt had remained as to this being the meaning of the first promise, it must have been fully removed by the prediction of Enoch, the seventh from Adam, who expressly declared who it was that should come and "destroy the works of the devil." For he "propheesied, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh:"^y and this prophecy is by no means to be confined to Christ's second coming, although it shall have its full and final completion in this great event.

It has been supposed by many learned writers, that our first parents, after being turned to God, were so big with expectation of a divine deliverer, that Eve mistook Cain for him. Therefore they thus render the words that she uttered, on the birth of her first-born; "I have gotten a man the Lord."^z

With respect to the preludes of the incarnation of the eternal Word, the following things may be observed.

1. This glorious Person frequently appeared in the *likeness* of human nature. His appearance, as the Angel of the LORD, or the Angel-ГЕHOVAH, we have already considered; as an evidence that the doctrine of the Trinity was revealed under the Old Testament. But here it demands our attention, that when he revealed himself in this character, he often assumed the likeness of man; and made himself known by such language, or such acts, as clearly expressed the work that he was to perform, as "the Word made flesh," and respected his various functions, as the Prophet, Priest, and King of his Church. When the LORD, attended by two of his ministering spirits, appeared to Abraham in the plains of Manire, they seemed to be all clothed with humanity. Hence Abraham took them for three ordinary travellers; and made the same preparations for them, that he was wont to do, when exercising hospitality.^a It was only by the language of one of these celestial visitors, particularly as foretelling the birth of the promised seed, and by the discovery he made of his heart-searching power in rebuking Sarah for her secret ridicule, that Abraham was undeceived.^b But during the whole of the interview, this divine person retained the same likeness; and when he arose to depart, was brought on his way by Abraham, as a man is accompanied by his friend.

In the same manner did he appear unto Jacob, when he was preparing to meet with his incensed brother Esau. The patriarch "was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day."^c This expression, "he was left

^y Jude, ver. 14.

^b Ver. 10, 13—15.

^z Gen. iv. 1.

^c Chap. xxxii. 24.

^a Chap. xviii.

"alone," especially as connected with what is previously mentioned concerning his sending all his family "over the brook," is plainly meant to inform us, that he, who wrestled with him, was not one of the sons of men. On this occasion, the Son of God not only assumed the likeness of our nature, so that he might be *seen*; but condescended to assume so near a resemblance of its reality, that he might be *felt*. What a wonderful prelude of that grace which was afterwards to be manifested, when the eyes of the disciples should not only see, but handle the self-same Word of life !*d*

Jacob knew that he had wrestled with God; for the thing for which he wrestled was the blessing, which no creature could confer. As the appearance of God in the likeness of man, especially as he made himself known both to the sight and to the touch was a striking prelude of the incarnation; the testimony given to Jacob, as to his success, included no inconsiderable intimation with respect to the union of the divine and human nature in one person. The Angel said to him: "As a prince hast thou power" "with God, and with men, and hast prevailed." The word *men* is in the plural, indeed; as implying an assurance of protection wherever he should go, and particularly of his having power over his enraged brother. But what was the pledge of this? His prevalence in this astonishing interview, when he "had power," even in the way of bodily wrestling, "over the angel" who appeared in the form of *man*; because "he had power with" him as "*God*," by his faith and importunity, his tears and supplications.*e*

To inform Jacob, and the Church in succeeding ages, that the condescension of the Son, in assuming our nature, should nowise impair or derogate from his essential majesty and power; this divine wrestler, during the struggle, touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh, so that it was out of joint. This is understood of the socket in which the ball of the thigh-bone moves: and it has been observed, that such is the situation of this place, that Jacob must have been assured no mere man could have so *touched* it in wrestling, as to have effected a dislocation.

In the same form did he appear unto Joshua, while he blockaded Jericho. "There stood a man over against him, with his "sword drawn in his hand," who said to him, "As prince of the "host of JEHOVAH am I now come." From this testimony Joshua must have known, that this was he who had been promised as God's Angel, who should go before Israel, and deliver their enemies into their hands.*f* By the form he assumed, it was also declared to Joshua, and by him to the Church, that this Angel should afterwards "partake of flesh and blood." This appearance, indeed, was not merely a prelude of his incarnation in

d 1 John i. 1.

e Hos. xii. 4.

f Exod. xxiii. 23.

general. It "testified beforehand," that he should be manifested in human nature, as Immanuel, as God with us, "for us," and not "for our adversaries,"^g as the King and Lord of the Church; that in this nature he should conquer the serpent and his seed, and exercise absolute dominion over all the enemies of his true Israel. For he said to Joshua, "See, *I* have given into thine hand "Jericho." It was also declared, that He who should come in our nature, should, even as incarnate, be the object of religious adoration. For, as if the homage given by Joshua, in falling on his face to the earth, and worshipping, had been too little; this *man* said to him, "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the "place whereon thou standest is holy."^h

That JEHOVAH appeared in the likeness of man to Gideon, is evident from the fear that seized him, when, by the miraculous consumption of his sacrifice, he perceived that this was a heavenly visitant.ⁱ That he made a similar appearance to the wife of Manoah, is no less clear from the account she gave to her husband of the visit she had received; from the prayer afterwards presented by Manoah; as well as from the questions he put to the Angel, and the amazement of both when they discovered that this was a vision of God.^k They at first considered him only as "a man of God," or a prophet. By both these apparitions, the divine Word taught the Church, that he should at length actually appear as her great High-priest. When he consumed the sacrifice of Gideon, by causing fire to rise out of the rock, he symbolically signified, that he should appear both as her priest and sacrifice; as her priest, presenting an offering acceptable to God through the fire of his own Spirit; as a sacrifice for expiating all her guilt, as he should himself be burnt in the sufferings of his human nature, by the fire of divine wrath. His ascending in the flame of the altar, when Manoah had presented a burnt-offering, might intimate that, as "the High-priest of our "profession," he would ascend to heaven, and enter into the holiest of all, through the merit of his own oblation.

When Moses desired to see the glory of God, he said to him, "Thou shalt see my back-parts."^l Hence it is most probable that he saw the likeness of human nature; as an anticipation of that blessed discovery which was afterwards made to him on the mount of transfiguration. It has been supposed, indeed, with great probability, that in this manner God ordinarily communicated his will to Moses; as it is said that he spake with him "face to face, as "a man speaketh unto his friend."^m

By similar manifestations did the Lord comfort his Church, while she was in Babylon, and while she continued in a low state after her return from captivity. Ezekiel, by the river Chebar,

^g Josh. v. 13.

ⁱ Judges vi. 22.

^l Exod. xxxiii. 23.

^h Chap. v. 13—15; vi. 1, 2.

^k Chap. xiii. 6, 8, 11, 17, 21, 22.

^m Ver. 11.

saw the likeness of a glorious throne ; and “ upon the likeness of “ the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above “ upon it.”ⁿ No manifestation could tend more to comfort the souls of believers, in their afflicted state in a strange land, than such a prelude of the future incarnation of their God, and of the glorious majesty of his kingdom. After the return of the captives, when they were so weak as to be threatened with destruction from their enemies, Zechariah was favoured with a vision of Christ, as “ a man—standing among the myrtle-trees that were “ in the bottom. Behind him were there red horses speckled and “ white.”^o While this vision represented the low and mournful state of the Church, it expressed her safety, from the presence of Christ in the midst of her, as the Lord of all the angels of heaven, whom he employs as his ministers to fulfil his pleasure in the kingdom of providence, in subserviency to the interests of his spiritual kingdom. Many similar visions had this prophet. Particularly, the Angel who appeared to him as a man, expressly foretold his own mission to dwell as the LORD of hosts in the midst of his Church.^p

The very character of an *Angel* or *Messenger*, under which the Son appeared to the patriarchs, and to the Church under the Old Testament, while it declared that he was then sent by the Father, had a special reference to his future mission in our nature, as “ the Angel of the Covenant, who should come to his temple.”^q The many appearances, which he made in the likeness of man, if not meant as prejudices of his actual incarnation, and for confirming the faith of the Church in this most important article, could have no other tendency than to lead her astray to idolatry. These appearances, so far from confirming her faith in that revelation given to her, must have directly frustrated one great end of it, which was to preserve the doctrines of the divine unity and spirituality ; and must have proved a snare, inducing her to “ change the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made “ like to corruptible man.”^r But when she knew that these were the manifestations of one divine person, solely in relation to a future incarnation for the redemption of lost man ; she was guarded against the folly of supposing that God had a human form, or that his pure essence had any affinity to gross matter.

II. The vision that Abraham had of a *furnace* and *lamp*, when God entered into covenant with him, may be viewed as a prelude of the incarnation. After he had, according to the divine command, divided the various parts of the sacrifice, and “ laid each “ piece one against another ;” when it was dark, he saw a smoking furnace and a burning lamp pass between the pieces.^s These have been generally viewed as symbols of the affliction of the posterity of Abraham in Egypt, and of their deliverance ; es-

ⁿ Ezek. i. 26.
^q Mal. iii. 1.

^o Zech. i. 8.
^r Rom. i. 23.

^p Chap. ii. 8—11.
^s Gen. xv. 10, 17.

pecially as we are informed in the context, that God foretold both the sufferings and the redemption of Israel, and that day entered into covenant with Abraham. Others have understood the *smoking furnace* as an emblem of the sufferings of Christ's human nature, under the wrath of God, as a Judge ; and the *burning lamp*, of his divine to which it is united, in consequence of which union it was impossible that he could succumb under his sufferings ; or of the glory that followed.^t

It is evident that the sacrifice prefigured that of Christ. The covenant made with Abraham, in as far as it respected spiritual and eternal blessings, was only a revelation of that covenant which had been made from eternity with Him who was promised as the seed of Abraham ; and in this point of view, it derived all its confirmation from the death of the great Sacrifice.

But can there be any thing improper in viewing these symbols, as referring both to the natural seed of Abraham, and to that *one* seed " which is Christ ;"^u to the former primarily, to the latter ultimately ? We know that Christ is the antitypical Israel ; and that what is spoken by one of the prophets ; " Out of Egypt " have I called my Son,"^v is by an evangelist understood as referring to the Saviour. We cannot so well perceive the propriety of this application, without supposing such a double reference. There are other passages of Scripture, which can scarcely be otherwise interpreted ; as the language of the Church in the book of Psalms, which seems to include the sufferings both of the type and of the antitype : " Many a time have they afflicted me from " my youth, may Israel now say ;—yet they have not prevailed " against me. The plowers plowed upon my back ; they made " long their furrows."^w The last words undoubtedly allude to Christ's " giving his back to the smiters," and to the deep incisions made by the scourge.

III. The *burning bush* may be viewed as a similar emblem. It has, indeed, been generally understood as shadowing forth the afflictions of Israel in Egypt, and at the same time her preservation by reason of the divine presence. With fully as much propriety may it be viewed as denoting the sufferings of the Messiah. " The Angel of the Lord appeared unto him (Moses) in a flame " of fire, out of the midst of a bush : and he looked, and behold, " the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. " And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, " why the bush is not burned."^x He, who appeared, was the Angel of the Lord, who had often before manifested himself in the likeness of man. The *bush* or *bramble*, as the word signifies, was a fit emblem of his humanity, which is represented " as a

^t See Edwards' Hist. Redemption, p. 52.

^v Hos. xi. 1 ; Mat. ii. 15.

^x Exod. iii. 2, 3.

^u Gal. iii. 16.

^w Psal. cxxix. 1—3.

"root springing out of a dry ground." "The flame of fire" denotes the wrath of God, which burned, but did not consume his human nature. The reason why this could not be consumed, was the inhabitation of the Angel-*JEHOVAH*. This was indeed "a great-sight;" for there was "no sorrow like unto his sorrow, wherewith the *LORD* afflicted him in the day of his fierce anger."^y

iv. The *ladder*, which Jacob saw in a dream, was a striking symbol of the incarnation. "Behold, a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the *LORD* stood above it, and said, I am the *LORD* God of Abraham thy father."^z Our Lord must himself be the best interpreter of this vision; and he explains it to Nathaniel in these words, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of man."^a Heaven was *shut* against man by his sin. There could be no comfortable intercourse between earth and that better country. But through Christ as Mediator, it is *open*. In his human nature he is as a ladder "set upon the earth;" in his divine, he "reaches to heaven;" by his work as God-man, he unites both. As *JEHOVAH* "stood above it;" this denotes that God, as judge, is reconciled to man, and admits him through Christ to the most intimate fellowship. The angels of God ascend and descend on this ladder. This signifies, that all things in heaven and earth are recapitulated in Christ; that men are admitted to fellowship with angels; and that these blessed spirits are constantly employed in ministering to the Mediator, in subserviency to the interests of his kingdom, and to the saints through him. Instead of "ascending and descending *on*," some incline to read, "*to* the Son of man."^b But it is evident that the evangelist uses the particle *επι*, the same which occurs in the Septuagint,* in reference to the use of a ladder; and if rendered *to*, the force of the allusion would be lost.

v. This was also prefigured by the *cloud* of *glory*, or the *glory* of the *LORD*, which dwelt in the tabernacle and temple. When the Israelites departed from Egypt, "the *LORD* went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night, in a pillar of fire, to give them light."^c He, who thus went before them, was Christ; for he is afterwards called "the Angel of God."^d After the erection of the tabernacle, "the cloud

* One would almost think that John, in narrating the language of his Master, had expressed himself in conformity to this version, which was then commonly used by his countrymen. *Οι αγγελοι τῶ Θεοῦ ἀπεβαινον και κατεβαινον ἐπ' αὐτην*. Gen. xxviii. 12. *Τους αγγελους τῶ Θεοῦ αναβαινοντας και καταβαινοντας ἐπι τον Υιον τῶ ανθρωπου*. John i. 51.

^y Lam. i. 12.

^z Gen. xxviii. 12, 13.

^a John i. 51.

^b Vid. Lampe in John i. 51.

^c Exod. xiii. 21.

^d Chap. xiv. 19.

"abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled" it.^e This was a lively emblem of the incarnation of the Word, to whom this expression, "the glory of the Lord," seems to be appropriated, as a personal designation.^f As the cloud *abode* on the tabernacle, and the glory filled it, in this sense God was said to *dwell among* the children of Israel.^g The type received its completion, when "the Word," who is "the brightness of glory," "was made flesh, and *dwelt among*" men "as in a tabernacle," so that they "beheld his glory."^h For the human nature of Christ is "the true tabernacle which God pitched, and not man."ⁱ In him "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." That emblematical glory, of which we speak, in like manner filled the temple; and this also was a type of Christ's human nature. We therefore read of "the temple of his body."^k

vi. The rights of *primogeniture* had a special respect to the incarnation of the Messiah. These, although confirmed by the law of Moses, were in force long before. They had the divine sanction from a very early period. For God said to Cain, with respect to his younger brother Abel, "If thou doest well, unto thee shall be his desire, and he shall rule over thee."^m Thus they were nearly, if not absolutely, coeval with the first promise; as to this they evidently bore a relation. One special honour, restricted to the first-born, was that he should be the ancestor of that seed in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed. Thus the birthright was appropriated to Isaac, concerning whom God said to Abraham, "With him will I establish my covenant;" and, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called."ⁿ On this account especially, is Esau charged with profanity, in selling his birthright.

As the primogeniture secured this peculiar honour, and was therefore a perpetual memorial of the promise of the Messiah; it was attended with several distinct privileges, which were all expressive of his character. Had the first-born a double portion of his father's goods? This prefigured him, who is "heir of all things." Had he dominion over his brethren? This pointed forward to him, who was promised as God's "first-born, high above the kings of the earth," "the first-born among many brethren." Did the first-born, as holy to the Lord, consecrate the rest of the family? It was a prelude of the work of Christ in our nature, who for our sakes consecrated himself in his sufferings, that he might "purify us as a peculiar people."

vii. The law of the *levirate* may be viewed in the same light. According to this law, if a man died without leaving children, his brother next in age, or the nearest of kin, was bound to marry the widow of the deceased, and raise up a successor to him. The

^e Exod. xl. 54.

^h John i. 14.

^m Gen. iv. 7.

^f Isa. xl. 5.

ⁱ Heb. viii. 2.

ⁿ Chap. xvii. 21; xxi. 12.

^g Exod. xxv. 8.

^k John ii. 19, 21.

first-born of this marriage was legally viewed as the descendant of the elder brother, who had died childless.^o This ordinance was in force before the Mosaic dispensation, as appears from the history of Judah's family :^h and some carry it back to the days of Shem, or even of Adam. It was undoubtedly enjoined by divine revelation ; and afterwards incorporated into the law given by Moses.^g While there was a political reason for this ordinance, that inheritances might be preserved in the different families to which they belonged, there can be no ground to doubt that there was a far higher one. The honour of the first-born was thus singularly guarded, that in their successive generations the Israelites might direct their eye to Him who, as "the first-born of every creature," must "in all things have the pre-eminence."^r In every other case, such a connexion was expressly prohibited.^s When, therefore, there was a positive law, expressly dispensing with another in certain circumstances ; especially as this dispensation respected a law evidently founded on moral principles, and meant to preserve society from such mixtures as are abhorrent to nature ; it could not pass with the Israelites, without exciting a spirit of inquiry as to the mystery it involved.

VIII. As *circumcision* symbolically taught the doctrine of original sin, it also respected the manner in which it should be taken away. It had a relation to the *birth* of a Saviour, who was to appear "in the likeness of sinful flesh," and be made sin for us. It was appointed as a seal of the covenant made with Abraham, which especially respected the Messiah who was to spring from him, as descending from Isaac. by whom he was prefigured. As an evidence of this special relation, which the seal of circumcision had to the promised seed, it is worthy of observation, that it was not enjoined on Abraham before the birth of Ishmael, his son by the bond-woman, but at the very time of his receiving the promise of a son by Sarah : nor did he become the father of this child of promise, till he had submitted to this rite.^t

"It was particularly in respect of the Messiah," says the learned Allix, "that God would have that mark made upon that part of man's body which is inservient to generation.—God could do nothing more agreeable to the idea the Israelites had of the Messiah, and of his birth, than to distinguish them by a relation to this blessed seed, which he promised them ; as God designed, without all question. by that means, to oblige the Jews to remember the first promise made to mankind ; so no doubt. he intended by it to fix their minds upon the consideration of that favour he had shewed to them, as well as to Abraham, to distinguish them from all the people of the earth, that the Deliverer of the world might be born in their commonwealth, and

^o Deut. xxv. 6.

^h Gen. xxxviii. 7, 8, &c.

^g Deut. xxv. 5—10.

^r Col. i. 13, 18.

^s Lev. xviii. 16. ; xx. 21.

^t Gen. xvii. 10, 15, 16. ; xviii. 10. ; xxi. 1, 2.

"from one of their posterity. It was the same prospect of the Messiah, which made God condemn those to death, who should either remain uncircumcised themselves, or leave their children so."^u

ix. The mode of *swearing* observed by some of the patriarchs, deserves our attention here. It would appear, that the most ancient and most ordinary custom was, to lift up the hand. Hence Abraham said to the king of Sodom; "I have lifted up mine hand to JEHOVAH the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth."^v But afterwards we find the same patriarch observing a different mode. When he employed his steward Eliezer to take a wife to his son of the daughters of his own people, he said to him; "Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh; and I will make thee swear by JEHOVAH, &c.—And the servant put his hand under the thigh of his master, and sware to him concerning that matter."^w Some view this rite merely as a token of subjection, as being the manner in which inferiors swore to their superiors.^x Others with much more probability, consider it as having a mystical reference. It has accordingly been interpreted, as either referring to the sign of circumcision, or to the promise of the Messiah. Did it immediately respect circumcision? It appears, then, from what we have already seen, that it must have ultimately referred to the promised seed. It is, however, the judgment of some learned writers, that to this it directly referred. The Messiah was to come out of Abraham's loins or thigh. For, with respect to descent, these are used as synonymous terms. Therefore the posterity of Jacob are called the "souls that came out of Jacob's thigh," as the word literally signifies.^y The same expression is used as to the seventy sons of Gideon.^z It is probable, that the patriarchs still continued to swear by the hand lifted up, in ordinary or civil matters; but that they used the other mode, when swearing in things pertaining to the covenant and promise. As the oath taken by the servant of Abraham, had this reference, because he wished to prevent Isaac from mingling with the idolatrous Canaanites; the other instance, which we have recorded, was of the same kind. Jacob, when dying, took an oath of Joseph, that he should not bury him in Egypt, but with his fathers in the land of promise.^a Now, as it is said of Joseph himself, that "by faith he gave commandment concerning his bones;"^b we cannot reasonably suppose that the conduct of his father, in requiring an oath from him with the same view, proceeded from any inferior principle. From the manner in which Jacob addressed Joseph, it can scarcely be supposed, that he asked him to swear in this peculiar form in to-

^u Reflections on the Books of Scripture, Vol. i. Part. 2. chap. 15.

^v Gen. xiv. 22.

^w Chap. xxiv. 2, 9.

^x Hiedegger Histor. Patriarch. Vol. 2. p. 135.

^y Gen. xlv. 26.; also Exod. i. 5.

^z Judg. viii. 30.

^a Gen. xlvii. 29—31.

^b Heb. xi. 22.

ken of inferiority. Jacob was still his father. But so great was the dignity of Joseph, that Jacob speaks to him as one soliciting a signal favour from his superior : " If now *I have found grace in thy sight*, put, *I pray thee*, thy hand under my thigh,—bury me not, *I pray thee*, in Egypt."

x. The custom observed among the posterity of Jacob, of not eating of the *sinew* that *shrank*, deserves particular notice. This custom originated from the wonderful struggle that their ancestor had with the Angel-Redeemer, which we have already considered. " The hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, while he wrestled with him.—Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day : because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank."c It has been supposed, that Jacob, by divine inspiration, enjoined this abstinence on his posterity ; and indeed the words may be read, " The children of Israel may not eat of the sinew which shrank." The mention here made of this rite, if not an express approbation of it, at least implies no censure. It must at any rate be supposed, that there was a special providence of God overruling the observance of this rite, as a perpetual memorial of that unparalleled interview, and of its design. The children, seeing their fathers carefully abstain from eating of this sinew, would as naturally say, as concerning the passover, " What mean ye by this ?" They could not but reply, that they did it in remembrance of Jacob's wrestling with God in the appearance of man : and in as far as their knowledge or faith reached, they would explain the relation of this manifestation to the future appearance of the God of Jacob in human nature.

Various have been the opinions entertained, as to the reason of Jacob's receiving the mark of weakness in this part of his body. I shall venture a conjecture, which seems to arise from what has been already observed, in regard to the singular mode of swearing used by him, as well as by his grandfather. As the Messiah, the promised seed, was to spring from his *thigh* ; might not the all-wise God set this signal mark of human imbecility here, still to remind Jacob and his posterity, that, although he had received the promise of this peculiar *blessing*, and a renewed confirmation of it on this occasion, it was not his natural birthright, nor procured by his own merit or power, but wholly of grace ? According to this view, it might be the will of God, that Jacob should bear a mark of weakness, as to that very point in which he was to be honoured above all other men ; and have a perpetual lesson of humility, in regard to what would be most apt to excite his natural pride.

This great doctrine of the incarnation of a divine Person, was revealed comparatively in an obscure manner to the patriarchs

and under the law. Yet believers, who lived in those ages, saw the day of Christ; they saw it afar off, and were glad. The promise of the incarnation of Christ was the ground of their hope. This, as connected with a persuasion of his presence in the Church, as that divine Person who should at length actually assume human nature, was the foundation of their triumph over all the enemies who threatened her destruction.^d Is not the ground of our triumph greatly enlarged? Is not the evidence of our security wonderfully confirmed? God hath been "manifested in the flesh." Jesus is known as Immanuel. Are not we, then, under still stronger obligations to sing; "The Lord of hosts is *with us*, the God of Jacob is our refuge?"

We have seen, that there were many preludes of the incarnation. Thus he, who from eternity engaged himself as our Surety, early manifested his love to the children of men. These were all testimonies of the infinite pleasure he had in the prospect of his work of mediation in our world. Thus he anticipated his habitation among men. Did the father delight in him? He delighted in those whom he was in a little to call his brethren. Was he the object of the infinite love of the Father as his essential image? He was equally so, as the Surety of lost man. The Father loved him, because he was to lay down his life. Hence he declares, "I was daily *his delights*, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth; and *my delights* were with the sons of men."^e All the infinite love of the Father to him as the Surety, he as it were transferred towards those for whom he had undertaken, in the actings of his love to them. What unspeakable reason have we, then, to "love him who first loved us!"

SECTION XII.

The Miraculous Conception illustrated from the History of Melchizedek;—from various instances of Conception beyond the ordinary course of Nature;—from the Laws given to Israel concerning Virginity.

God did not merely foretell, and in various ways anticipate the Incarnation of the Word: the Church was also informed, that he should partake of our nature in a way different from all mere men. Besides the prophecies concerning his being the seed of the woman, and being born of a virgin, there were various preludes of this wonderful event.

^d Isa. vii. 11, 14; viii. 9, 10.

^e Prov. viii. 30, 31.

I. From an inspired writer we learn, that the history of *Melchizedek* had a particular reference to the character of the *Messiah*. Being "without father, and without mother," he was "made like unto the Son of God."^e This language has no respect to his natural birth; for in this respect the king of Salem was undoubtedly like other men. But it refers to the silence of Scripture on this head. For it was the will of God there should be no account of his descent, that he might historically resemble Him, who is without father as man, and without mother as God. The Apostle, indeed, seems to have the official character of Christ especially in his eye; as he had no predecessor in his priestly office: and hence he proves its superiority to that in the family of Aaron. But even those who take the words in this view, admit that they also regard his personal character. This must necessarily be admitted. For had he not been "without father," as man, he would have wanted that perfection which was requisite according to the nature of the type. "Beginning of days," after the common course of nature, would have proved an insuperable bar to his being "a priest after the power of an endless life."

II. In various instances, God manifested his power, in causing women to *conceive* beyond the ordinary course of nature. There were two great obstacles to the accomplishment of the promise made to Abraham, of his having issue by Sarah. She was constitutionally barren; and when the promise was restricted to her posterity, she was past the time of life. Any of these was of itself a sufficient obstacle. Although she had not been barren, no woman had ever proved a mother in her circumstances. Hence her son Isaac was an eminent figure of Christ; because he was conceived, not properly by strength of nature, but by virtue of the promise. This wonderful conception could not but greatly assist faith, with respect to the promise of "the seed of the woman." It shewed that there was no absurdity in believing that a virgin should conceive. The deadness of Abraham's body, and of Sarah's womb, made the one event naturally as possible as the other. Sarah could, no more than Mary, become a mother, but by a miracle. Isaac was "born after the Spirit,"^f in consequence of his miraculous operation; and thus in a striking manner prefigured Him who was conceived by the power of the same divine agent. It is remarkable, that as Sarah and Mary both made substantially the same objection, the same answer is given in both cases; as if the Spirit of inspiration would thus call our attention to the intimate connexion between the two histories. Sarah said, "Shall I of a surety bear a child, *which am old*?" Mary made a similar objection; "How shall this be, seeing I *know not a man*?" Both are founded on the apparent impossibility of the thing. The reply of the angel to Mary, "With God nothing shall be impossible," is materially the same with that given to Sarah, "Is any

^e Heb. vii. 3.

^f Gal. iv. 29.

“ thing too hard for the Lord ?” This as expressed in the version of the Old Testament, generally in use among the Jews when the New was written, is almost in the same words with those recorded by Luke : “ With God shall any thing be impossible ?”^g

In various respects was Samson a type of Christ ; and among others, in the circumstances of his conception. As an angel appeared to the virgin, foretelling the conception of Him who should save his people from their sins ; that of Samson, who was a typical Saviour, was foretold in the same manner. “ There was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah, and his wife was barren, and bare not. And the Angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now thou art barren, and bearest not, but thou shalt conceive and bear a son.”^h

As God had in ancient times given different displays of his power in this respect, to strengthen the faith, and excite the expectation of his people, as to the completion of the great promise ; when the time was at hand, he would awaken their attention by a new display of the same kind. The wife of Zacharias appears as another Sarah. Nay, both Abraham and Sarah seem to be again brought on the stage. For he was an old man, and his wife not only barren, but “ well stricken in years.” There were two mysteries conjoined in the birth of Christ ; the incarnation of the Angel-ЖЕHOVAH, and his conception in the womb of a virgin. As these things were so extraordinary, two signs are offered, which might tend to conciliate the faith of that people to whom he was promised. For many ages, God had given no immediate revelation of his will. But on this occasion, there was the vision of an angel, and the conception of an aged and barren woman.

Divine wisdom appeared in the choice of the parents, and in the character of the son, as well as in the concomitant circumstances and the season of this display of divine power. The *parents* had both been long of the highest repute for true religion. “ They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.” There could be no reasonable suspicion, that two such persons would combine in imposing a false story on the nation. Zacharias being a priest, what concerned him must have been far better known than if he had been in a private station. Elisabeth, being a near relation of Mary, the latter had the best opportunity of knowing all that concerned this remarkable manifestation. *He*, whose birth was thus distinguished, was no ordinary child. He was to be the immediate forerunner of the Messiah. The respect which his future office bore to the Saviour, marked him out as the most

^g Μη αδυνατησει παρα τω Θεω ρημα ; Gen. xviii. 14. Ουκ αδυνατησει παρα τω Θεω παν ρημα. Luke i. 37.
^h Judges xiii. 2, 3.

proper person for a sign of his miraculous conception. Was John to "be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb?" The early appearance of extraordinary wisdom and sanctity, would be a permanent attestation of the truth of the miracles preceding his birth. Such *circumstances* attended this sign, that although the parents had been capable of imposture, no room was left for it. Zacharias was at Jerusalem, in the temple, engaged in his ministration, in the very act of burning incense, while "the whole multitude of the people were praying without," at the time that he was visited by the angel. Zacharias did not believe his testimony, and having demanded a sign of the truth of it, himself became a sign to all who saw him, both of the reality of the vision, and of the danger of incredulity. For he was "dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things were performed." The people at first "perceived that he had seen a vision:" and as he continued in the same state till "the days of his ministration were accomplished," and for several months afterwards; this well-known and extraordinary fact must have excited the wonder and expectation of the great body of the nation. The *season* in which this sign was given, was the most proper that could have been selected. At this time the people in general "looked for redemption in Israel." It was also only a few months before the appearance of that *sign* which JEHOVAH himself was to give.ⁱ As it prepared the minds of believers, and tended to arouse the body of the nation; it was especially a mean of confirmation to the faith of Mary. Hence the angel Gabriel, when removing her objection as to the possibility of the fact predicted, refers her to Elisabeth, as a living testimony of the power of God, in removing every natural obstruction to the fulfilment of his promise,—of his power in circumstances that bore the greatest resemblance of her own: "And behold thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her that was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible."^k

III. The laws given to the Israelites, concerning *virginity*, seem to have had a special respect to the conception and birth of our Saviour. They were of such a nature as powerfully to interest, not only young women themselves in the preservation of their chastity, but also their parents. When a woman was married, if it was found that she had formerly been seduced; she was not only to be put to death, but to suffer at "the door of her father's house."^l The whole family were thus partly involved in her punishment; because they were all bound to watch over her conduct. This was especially incumbent on her father, in whose house she resided till she removed to that of her husband. If a damsel was defiled after being betrothed, before the consummation of her marriage, both she and the man who defiled her

ⁱ Isa. vii. 14.

^k Luke i, 5—37.

^l Deut. xxii. 20, 21.

were to be put to death.^m That there might be no imposition, certain tokens were to be produced, attested and examined.ⁿ The trial by the waters of jealousy, by means of which the truth was miraculously discovered, was another institution which must have had great influence in deterring women from a breach of chastity.^o They were also subjected to a periodical separation, as unclean. This prevented their being married at this season, and put it out of their power to impose false tokens, in consequence of their situation.^p

These ordinances were indeed meant for the preservation of chastity in general. But they seem to have been designed to guard the state of virginity, in relation to the miraculous conception of the Saviour. Had the slightest ground of suspicion remained with Joseph, he had different ways of putting Mary to trial, and of obtaining satisfaction to his own mind. From his character as, "a just man," we may be assured that he would by no means have retained her, had he not been fully convinced that she was with child in a supernatural way. All that the promise, or the necessity of the case, expressly required, was, that Jesus should be born of a virgin. This indeed was necessary; for, as we have formerly seen, he could not otherwise have been free from original depravity. But it was the will of God, that he should be born, not merely of a virgin, but of "a virgin espoused." In this divine wisdom eminently appears. For thus God provided means for authenticating the genealogy of Christ. Being born, after Mary was betrothed, he was legally the child of Joseph; and among the Jews, the genealogy was especially reckoned by the father. Thus also, a guardian was provided for Mary and her child, during the persecution of Herod. Besides, the circumstance of her being espoused, together with that of Joseph's taking her to his house, preserved her from being treated by others as a woman lost to virtue. While, on the one hand, her espousals subjected her conduct to the most rigid scrutiny, the reception given her by Joseph, on the other, was a public attestation of her innocence.

We perceive the blessed concurrence of all the Persons of the adorable Trinity in the work of our redemption. It appears with the fullest evidence in the very manner in which Christ received our nature. The Father "sent forth his Son, made of a woman." The Son himself "took on him the form of a servant." The Holy Ghost "prepared a body" for him, by sanctifying part of the substance of a virgin. What a wonderful display of love to lost man! How ardently ought we to love that adorable Father who sent his Son; this co-equal Son, who cheerfully came, who said, "In the volume of thy book it is written 'of me;'" that blessed Spirit, who as it were anew began the work of creation for our sakes!

^m Deut. xxii. 23, 24.

ⁿ Ver. 15.

^o Num. 5. 11—31.

^p See this subject treated at large in Allix's Reflexions on the four last Books of Moses, chap. 20.

SECTION XII.

On Substitution and Atonement.—The Doctrine of Substitution known to the Church from the beginning.—Imposition of Hands on the Head of the Victim.—The Victim legally subjected to the Curse.—Atonement made by Blood.—The Covenant confirmed by Sacrifice.—In this the Worship of the Church especially consisted.—The Ceremonial Institute, even by its Defects, directed to a better Atonement.—This prefigured by the Mercy-seat.—The History of the true Expiation contained in the New Testament.

To proclaim the incarnation of a Divine Person, is only part of the design of the Spirit of inspiration. It was a principal branch of his work, to "testify beforehand the sufferings of "Christ." All that is written with respect to his assumption of our nature, relates to the work of redemption, which from eternity he had engaged to accomplish. The Holy Scriptures, as to their great design and principal object, are just an history of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."^q

Before the coming of Christ to "take away sin by the sacrifice "of himself;" there were especially three different ways in which atonement was made; by the punishment of the guilty person, by the payment of a price, or by the substitution of the innocent for the guilty.

We sometimes read of atonement being made, when the guilty were *punished* in their own *persons*. Thus, when Phineas slew the daring transgressors, who were committing fornication in the camp, it is said that he "made an atonement for the children of "Israel."^r But it is to be observed, that the atonement in this instance was not made for the sin of the persons immediately concerned. For they perished in their iniquity. It was accepted of God for the congregation in general, for averting that wrath to which they were subjected by this iniquity. For the just God, as Governor of the world, demands from collective bodies the punishment of open transgressors; and if this be refused, he considers the society at large as chargeable with the guilt. So well pleased was he with the zeal of Phineas in executing judgment on this occasion, that the plague, which had gone forth against Israel, because of their transgression in the matter of Peor, was immediately stayed.^s It was counted unto Phineas "for righteousness in all generations for evermore;"^t and his family was confirmed in the possession of the priesthood. In like manner, God did not "turn from the fierceness of his anger" against his people, till "the accursed thing was destroyed from among them,"^u in the punishment of Achan and his family.^u

^q Rev. xiii. 8.

^t Psal. cvi. 31.

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^r Num. xxv. 6, 7, 13.

^u Josh. vii. 12, 26.

Y

^s Ver. 8.

Atonement was also made by the payment of a *price*. "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord when thou numberest them ; that there be no plague among them when thou numberest them." Half a shekel, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which was the double of that commonly current, was to be given for every male who was twenty years old and above. This was called "the atonement-money of the children of Israel ;" and in paying this sum, they "gave an offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for their souls."^v This payment prefigured our being "bought with a price ;"^w although not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the "precious blood of Christ." The rich were not to give more, nor the poor less. For all souls are alike precious in the sight of God ; and although some are greater sinners than others, nothing less than an atonement of infinite value can be accepted for any one. This price was to be paid by each individual whose age corresponded, every time the Israelites were numbered, under the penalty of his losing his life by an immediate stroke of divine justice. Thus God testified, that when he makes inquisition, it is impossible for the sinner to stand before him without an atonement.

But the principal mode of making atonement, was by the *substitution* and *punishment* of the *innocent* instead of the guilty ; or, to express it in one word, by sacrifice. This kind of expiation being the most common among the Israelites, and containing the most striking figure of the true, it demands our particular attention.

1. The doctrine of *substitution* was well known to the Church from the earliest period. As "Abel offered by faith," while we know that his offering was "of the firstlings of his flock," we may safely infer, that the worship of God by sacrifice was of divine appointment. Now, every sacrifice necessarily implied the idea of substitution. We cannot suppose, that the true worshippers of God were so stupid as to imagine that the offering of brutes could in itself be acceptable to him. They knew, that "if he were hungry, he would not tell them, because the world is his, and all the fulness thereof ; that he would not eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats." Did they offer by faith ? Then they must have respected not merely the divine institution, but its design. That God, who required sacrifice, would undoubtedly inform them, that what they inflicted on the innocent victims, which they presented to him, was only what themselves deserved.

When the people transgressed, by worshipping the golden

^v Exod. xxx. 11—16.

^w 1 Cor. vi. 20.

calf, Moses, the typical Mediator, who was innocent in this matter, under a deep sense of the necessity both of satisfaction and of substitution, proposed himself as a victim of divine vengeance, instead of the guilty congregation. "Yet now," he said, "if thou wilt, forgive their sin : and if not," if there be no other mode of reconciliation, "blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which thou hast written."^x But a better Mediator was necessary.

As true worshippers could not apprehend that God took pleasure in sacrifice for its own sake, they must have known that no victim they offered could have any merit ; that there was no proportion between the sacrifice of a beast, and the sin of a man. They could not indeed "offer by faith," without looking forward to a better substitute. Without the exercise of faith in the suretyship of the Messiah, their services could not have been accepted. When it is said of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Sarah, that they "all died in faith," we learn what this grace principally respected. They had not, as to the substance, "received the promises," but they "saw them afar off, and embraced them."^y It was Christ as a Surety, whom, in the promises, they "saw afar off." All their sacrifices bore a direct relation to his "one offering." For in the first promise he was expressly revealed as a suffering Saviour. Hence, when addressing the Father concerning that will, by which we are sanctified, through the offering of his own body, he says ; "At the *head* of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will."^z

[¶] II. The *imposition of hands* on the head of the victim, is a circumstance which particularly deserves our attention, as a farther proof of substitution in making atonement. This was the injunction with respect to "any man who should bring an offering. He shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering ; and it shall be accepted for him, to make an atonement for him."^a This was an emblem of his transferring his guilt, as far as this could be done, to the victim. If in any instance the whole congregation had sinned ignorantly, and their offence was afterwards known to them, the congregation was to offer a young bullock for the sin, and the elders, as their representatives, were to "lay their hands on the head of the bullock before the Lord."^b A similar rite was to be observed by the high-priest, on the great day of atonement. He was to "lay both his hands on the head of the live-goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, in all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat."^c This rite was unworthy of the divine institution, and of man's observance ; except as typifying that great act of God's justice in laying upon Christ the iniquities of all his people, and the exercise of their faith in cordially assenting to this act, and embracing him as their only Surety.

^x Exod. xxxii. 32.

^a Lev. i. 4.

^y Heb. xi. 13.

^b Chap. iv. 14, 15.

^z Psal. xl. 7, 8.

^c Chap. xvi. 21.

III. The victim was thus legally subjected to the *curse* merited by the transgressor. As an evidence of this, all the sin-offerings, whose blood was to be carried into the holy place, were to be burned without the camp, that it might not be defiled.^d This prefigured Christ's being "made a curse for us," when substituted as our atoning sacrifice.

We have already viewed the execution of the seven sons of Saul, because of the guilt of their parent in slaying the Gibeonites, as a striking proof of God's visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children. The same event contains a remarkable illustration of the doctrines of substitution and atonement. God subjected Israel to a temporary curse, in giving them up to famine for three years, because of Saul and his bloody house. According to the will of God, this curse must be transferred to *seven* of the sons of Saul; a mystical number, expressive perhaps of the legal perfection of the atonement thus to be made. Although, as far as appears, they were personally innocent, as to this crime, the curse was transferred to them. This appears from the design, from the consequence, and from the manner of their punishment. The *design* of their punishment was legally to remove the guilt of innocent blood from the nation of Israel. David, being divinely instructed as to the cause of the famine, said unto the Gibeonites, "What shall I do for you? and where-with shall I make the atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the LORD?" The *consequence* of the execution and interment of the sufferers was, that "God was entreated for the land." He accepted the atonement. But there was also something very remarkable in the *manner* of their punishment. From God's approbation of this whole affair, there can be no reasonable doubt that the Gibeonites were providentially directed, not only as to the atonement that they demanded, but the manner in which they proposed it should be made: "Let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up—in Gibeah of Saul." They propose that themselves should act as priests in this extraordinary sacrifice; and that the punishment should be hanging, the only one pronounced *accursed* by the law. Their language is still more express. They do not merely say, "We will hang them up;" but, "We will hang them up *unto the LORD*," as victims offered unto him, and solely devoted to bear that curse to which the nation had been subjected, and legally to bear it away. The expression is afterwards a little varied, in the narrative of the fact; but so as still to convey the same idea. "They hanged them on the hill *before the LORD*."^e The legal atonement was to be made for Israel, by means of their suffering in the very same manner in which He was to suffer, who was truly to be made a curse for us, being hanged on a tree; and who was thus to take away the iniquity of his people in one day. God was not entreated for the land, till these men were not

^d Lev. vi. 30.

^e 2 Sam. xxi. 1—14.

only hanged, but buried. This having been long delayed, David viewed it as a matter of such importance that he engaged in the work himself. For according to the law, he that was hanged, was to be buried on the same day, as being "the curse of God."^f This ordinance prefigured that the burial of Christ should be a solemn and practical evidence that our sins were covered and removed from God's sight, so as no more to rise up against us in judgment.

iv. It was necessary that atonement should be made by the shedding of *blood*. What rites soever were used, without this in ordinary cases there was no proper expiation. For "without shedding of blood there is no remission." It was not enough that the victim was slain: it was necessary that it should be slain by the effusion of blood. This institution referred both to the curse of the broken covenant, and to the manner in which it should be removed. The sentence of the law was, "Dying thou shalt die;" "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Now, it is declared that "the blood is the soul," that is, "the life;" not as if the blood were, strictly speaking, either the soul, or the animal life; but because the animal spirits, which are the organs of the soul, are in the blood. It, therefore, was the will of God that the blood of the victim should be shed; not only to shew the reality of its death, as, when the blood is separated from the body, the life is gone; but to declare that the person, for whom it was offered, had forfeited his life, his very soul, to divine justice, and that the law would not mitigate its sentence. In this shedding of blood there was a plain declaration of the substitution of the one for the other, as appears from the language of God to the Israelites; "The life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul;"^g literally "the *soul* of the flesh is in the blood." For the same word is used, as afterwards when we read of "an atonement for the soul." The life or soul of a beast is not here put on a footing with that of man. But this language is employed to declare that when the blood of a beast was shed, so that death ensued, all the soul which it possessed was given up instead of those for whom it was offered. This mode of offering also fitly prefigured the work of Christ, in "pouring out his soul unto death," in shedding his blood for the remission of sins.

There was but one case, in which atonement could be made, for any particular transgression, without blood. This was merely on the supposition of absolute necessity. If the offerer was so very poor that he could bring nothing that had blood, he might present a small quantity of flour.^h

"By the law almost all things were purged with blood." Not

^f Deut. xxi. 23.

^g Lev. xvii. 11.

^h Chap. v. 11—13.

only the tabernacle and all the holy vessels, but also the garments of the priests were sprinkled with it.ⁱ Before there could be any acceptable ministration for others, it was requisite that the priests should make atonement for themselves.^k For the altar itself an atonement was necessary.^l

v. Sacrifice was the great mean of *confirming* the *covenant* of grace, as dispensed before the coming of Christ. When God revealed this covenant to Abraham, he commanded him to sacrifice several creatures, and to divide them into different parts.^m Hence the phrase often used in the Old Testament, and indeed in the passage referred to,ⁿ of *striking* or *cutting* a covenant; because it was made by striking the victims, and sometimes by dividing them, as in the sacrifice offered by Abraham. This implied that the parties imprecated a similar vengeance on themselves, if they broke their engagement; especially as they sometimes passed between the parts of the divided victims.^o When God revealed his covenant, the effusion of blood always referred to the sacrifice of Christ; and signified that the complete satisfaction, made by this sacrifice, was and could be the only foundation of a gracious covenant, and of the restoration of transgressors to the divine favour.

This was the great confirmation of the covenant made with the Israelites. "For when Moses had spoken every precept unto "all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves "and of goats,—and sprinkled both the book and all the people; "saying, This is the blood of the covenant which God hath enjoined unto you."^p This prefigured the confirmation of the new covenant by blood of infinitely greater value and efficacy.

By this blood, it was at length actually confirmed, in the death of the antitypical Surety. Hence, in "coming to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant," we also come "to the blood of "sprinkling:" and the commemorative cup, in the ordinance of the Supper, is called "the new covenant in his blood." For as all the saving benefits of the covenant were purchased, they are all confirmed, by this blood, and made over to us as legacies, which have derived full validity from the death of the Testator.

When men entered into leagues of amity with each other, it was also called *striking* a covenant; and it would appear, that as they slaughtered beasts, it was not merely to feast on them, but as an act of religion.^q The mode enjoined by God, when he entered into covenant with man, seems to have been the pattern they followed. It is most probable, indeed, either that this plan was adopted in consequence of divine direction; or that the believing patriarchs meant to give greater solemnity to the transaction, by

ⁱ Exod. xxix. 21.

^m Gen. xv. 9, 10.

^p Heb. ix. 19, 20,

^k Lev. xvi. 6.

ⁿ Ver. 18.

^q Gen. xxxi. 54.

^l Exod. xxix. 36.

^o Jer. xxxiv. 18.

invoking that God as their witness, with whom they had "made a covenant by sacrifice."^r They acknowledged him, not only as the Maker of heaven and earth, but in that peculiar and federal character in which he had made himself known to the Church by a revelation of grace.

VI. The *worship* of the Church, from the beginning, especially consisted in sacrifice. Whatever other acts were performed, they were unacceptable, except in as far as they were connected with this. No pure offering could be presented, unless the hands of the worshipper were sprinkled with blood. Read the history of the Church, in relation to her religious services ; and for four thousand years it will be found written in the blood of her sacrifices.

The first account given of acceptable worship, is that of the offering of Abel ; and as his faith was manifested in this way, we may be assured that the faith of all the antediluvian patriarchs had the same evidence. Were further proof necessary, we have it in Noah's particular acquaintance with the distinction between clean and unclean beasts or fowls ; which certainly proceeded from the use which had been hitherto made of them in the worship of God. Did divine justice require that the wicked should be "cut down out of time," that their "foundation should be overthrown with a flood?" Still God could not look with pleasure on the earth. An ablution by water was not sufficient. It must be washed with blood. He could not "smell a savour of rest," till Noah, as the high-priest of a new world emerging from the waters, presented a sacrifice "of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl."^s And it was undoubtedly with a view to this, as the principal service of the Church, that God preserved in the ark those beasts and fowls, which were clean, by sevens ; "while the unclean were admitted only by two."^t

So fully were the patriarchs convinced of the importance of this worship, that when they took up their residence in any particular place, they no sooner pitched their tent, than they erected an altar. Even while on a journey, if they enjoyed any special token of the divine favour, they halted till they had built an altar, and called on the name of the Lord. While the progress of those, whom the world calls *great*, might, even in an early period, be marked by the remains of their encampments, or by the carcasses of those whom they had slain ; the various stations of the patriarchs might be traced by the altars they erected, as monuments of their reconciliation with God, and of their peace with man.^u

When God made choice of a peculiar people, for the preservation of his truths and ordinances, the sacrificial worship of the Church was augmented, instead of being diminished. The

^r Psal. l. 5.

^t Chap. vii. 2, 3

^s Gen. viii. 20, 21.

^u Chap. xii. 7, 8 ; xiii. 3, 4, 18

Passover was not merely to be observed on that night in which the destroying angel passed through, but during the existence of the Church of Israel. We can scarcely conceive a more lively emblem of substitution, than what took place in its first celebration. The Israelites were to sprinkle the blood of the paschal lamb on the door-posts and lintels of their houses ; and wherever this blood was sprinkled, the first-born were saved, while those of the Egyptians were involved in a common destruction. Here the blood of the lamb was evidently substituted and accepted instead of that of the first-born of Israel ; and clearly prefigured the slaying of that " Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world," by the efficacy of whose " precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot," we are redeemed from eternal destruction.

It was the will of God, that, from the nature of her worship, the Church should constantly be taught the necessity of atonement. Blood was perpetually streaming before her eyes. The Lamb of God was typically offered every morning, and every evening. On the Sabbath the oblation was doubled ; two lambs being offered instead of one. For, on this day of spiritual rest, the efficacy of the blood of Jesus is most eminently manifested, in the communication of grace to the souls of men. This sacrifice was offered, both morning and evening, for the whole congregation of Israel, and in their name.^v This denoted the exercise of all the spiritual Israel, in looking daily to Christ as their sacrifice, through whom alone they have access to God, and in deriving virtue from him as " made unto them sanctification." A distinct sacrifice was to be offered every new moon.^w When the Israelites presented their first-fruits, in the feast of harvest, they could not be accepted singly. It was necessary that blood should be offered with them.^x For however acceptable a sacrifice of thanksgiving be to God, it is acceptable only through the meritorious blood of Christ.

Besides the multitude of sacrifices, occasionally offered for the transgressions of individuals, one day every year was peculiarly appropriated to expiation. It was therefore distinctively denominated " a day of atonement."^y Such was the solemnity to be observed on this day, that the high-priest was previously to offer for his own purification, in the same manner as he had done at his first consecration.^z Notwithstanding the multiplicity of offerings, many sins must have been committed during the course of a year, for which no atonement had been made. The atonement made on this day was therefore meant, for legally taking away the guilt of sins of every kind, which had been formerly committed, and not expiated. But it was not confined to these. As the atonement was made for the whole congregation, both priests

^v Numb. xxviii. 2, 3, 9.

^y Lev. 27, 28.

^w Ver. 11.

^z Lev. xvi. 5, 6 ; ix. 2, 8.

^x Lev. xxiii. 18, 19.

and people ; it would seem to have been meant for all their former sins, for there is no exception of any. Thus it at once proclaimed the imperfection of the legal sacrifices, and in a very striking manner prefigured the efficacy of that atonement to be made by the antitypical High-priest, when he should "remove" "the iniquity of the land in one day."^a

VII. Even the *defective* nature of the ceremonial institute directed the worshippers to a better atonement. Sacrifice was appointed for some sins, and not for others ; appointed for the smallest offences, and not for the greatest. Thus, according to the law, no atonement was provided for idolatry or murder. These crimes, indeed, and others, of a like nature, admitted of no legal expiation ; because the transgressor was to be punished with death. But as God proclaimed that he was merciful and gracious, pardoning iniquities of every kind, and yet appointed no expiation in some cases ; it shewed, that he had a better atonement provided, the efficacy of which might extend even to those who could find no mercy from the law. Of this we have an example in the case of David. God desired not sacrifice or burnt-offering ; because none had been appointed for the expiation of such crimes. Yet he intimated to him, that he had "taken away his sin." This intimation being made by Him who "will by no means clear the "guilty," plainly signified, that divine mercy was exercised in relation to a better atonement than any the law could provide.

VIII. The *mercy-seat* was a permanent figure of a true atonement. As the ark contained the two tables of the law, its lid or covering was overlaid with pure gold ; and on this the cloud of glory rested. This was called the *covering mercy-seat*, from a word which primarily signifies to cover, or to overlay with pitch ; and in a secondary sense, to expiate, to make reconciliation, and also to pardon. As it interposed between the glory of God and the tables of testimony ; it signified the work of Christ, in covering our breaches of the law from the holiness and justice of God, by interposing himself as a Surety. We thus perceive the reason why the same word, which signifies to cover, is used to express the blessing of forgiveness : for when our sins are pardoned, they are covered from the eye of God as a condemning Judge, the perfect righteousness of our Elder Brother being cast over them. It is perhaps not unworthy of observation, that this word occurs but once in its literal and primary signification, to denote the covering of pitch given to the ark in which Noah and his family were saved.^b As this was necessary for preserving them from the waters by which the wicked were destroyed ; the *covering* given to another ark represented the necessity of a better defence, as it was a type of the same salvation prefigured by the deliverance of the Church from the deluge.^c

^a Zech. iii. 9.

^b Gen. vi. 14.

^c 1 Pet. iii. 21.

The word, used to denote the covering of the ark, is by our translators very properly rendered *mercy-seat*. For the Spirit of inspiration employs a term precisely of this meaning, in the New-Testament, when Christ is called a *propitiatory*; ^d the same term indeed, which often occurs in the Septuagint, as expressing the sense of the Hebrew. The literal *mercy-seat* was a striking emblem of him, "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiatory." For not only are our transgressions of the law covered by his righteousness; but as the typical *mercy-seat* as it were united the law of God and the visible symbol of his presence in the Church, so in Christ "mercy and truth are met together, righteousness " and peace have kissed each other."

On the day of atonement, the *mercy-seat* was to be sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifices. ^e This shews how we are accepted. It is only because of the atonement which our Redeemer hath made by the sacrifice of himself. Is he "set forth to be a " propitiatory," that is, "a *mercy-seat*?" It is only "through " faith in his blood, to declare God's righteousness in the remis- " sion of sins." The blood of the legal sacrifices was to be sprinkled before the *mercy-seat* seven times. This being used in Scripture as a mystical number, expressive of perfection, it intimated that he, who "is our propitiation," should give complete satisfaction to divine justice.

When the high-priest entered the most holy place with the blood of the sacrifices, the cloud of incense was to cover the ark and *mercy-seat*. ^f This testifies, not only that the sacrifice of Christ is "of a sweet-smelling savour;" but that, on the ground of his own oblation, he still effectually intercedes for his people; nay, that all the benefit they derive from his oblation, is immediately the effect of his eternal life as an interceding High-priest.

Wheresoever the professors of the true religion were scattered, they were still to pray towards the *mercy-seat*. ^g Thus are we taught, that our prayers and other duties can be accepted only through the antitypical propitiatory. Whatever we ask the Father, it must be in the name of Christ; that is, in the exercise of faith in his sacrifice and intercession.

All the fellowship with God which the Church of Israel enjoyed, was in relation to this type, according to his promise; "There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee "from above the *mercy-seat*." ^h In like manner, there can be no communion with God, no reception of any covenant blessing, no intimation of his love, but through the one Mediator. Our "fellowship is with the Father," only as he hath "called us to the "fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

^d Rom. iii. 21.

^e Lev. xvi. 14.

^f Ver. 13.

^g 1 Kings vi. 16, 19.; viii. 47, 48.; Ps. xxviii. 2.; Dan. vi. 10.

^h Exod. xxv. 22.

EX. As the Old Testament contains a symbolical representation of the atonement, we have, in the New, a distinct and complete history of the *real* expiation made for sin, by the *sacrifice* of Jesus Christ. From this history it is evident, that the one corresponds with the other as the substance with its shadow. Under the law, the most usual sacrifice was a lamb, which fitly represented the innocence and meekness of the "Lamb of God," as well as his usefulness to the Church, supplying her both with food and raiment. Was this offering to be without blemish? Jesus was "holily, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners." Was it to be taken out of the flock? Jesus was "raised up from among his brethren." Strength and youth were requisite in the typical victim; and our Saviour suffered in the prime of life. The sacrifice, in the passover, was separated for some time before it was offered. Jesus was separated or set apart, as the Surety for sinners, in the eternal purpose and covenant, in his miraculous conception, and in his solemn inauguration at Jordan. The paschal lamb was thus separated four days; and it has been observed, that Christ made his solemn entry into Jerusalem, nearly about the same time before his suffering.^k Were the sacrifices under the law hallowed or sanctified, in their being offered to the Lord? Jesus sanctified himself, *for the sake* of his people, in his one offering.^m Were the hands of the priests, in name of all the congregation of Israel, laid on the victim? The hands of the priests were indeed upon him, whom God had delivered up as our Surety. They conspired with the rulers against him. He was taken by their officers, and crucified at their instigation, the multitude assenting to his death: Was it requisite that not a bone of the paschal lamb should be broken? In him this type was strictly fulfilled, although in this instance there was a deviation from the common mode of treating those who were crucified. Could there be no typical remission "without the shedding of blood?" From the accidental conduct of one of the heathen soldiers, no less uncommon than the circumstance just now mentioned, the blood of the great Sacrifice was actually shed. The action of the soldier was accidental as to him, as proceeding from the mere wantonness of barbarity; though immutably determined in the counsel of God, and necessary in order to the completion of the prophecies and figures. Was the victim under the law ceremonially accursed? Jesus sustained the curse, bearing the wrath of a holy and sin-avenging God, in our stead. Was the sacrifice, after the blood was shed, to be consumed with that sacred fire which came down from heaven, and burned on the altar? The sacrifice of Christ's human nature, as presented on the altar of the divine, was fired by that holy flame of love, kindled by the Spirit in the heart of our adorable Surety. Was it necessary that incense should be offered with the blood of the victim? Christ not only entered into the

ⁱ Exod. xii. 5.

^j Lev. xxii. 1, 2.

^k John xii. 1, 12.

^m John xvii. 19.

holy place not made with hands, with his own blood ; but even in the very act of offering, he “ made intercession for the transgressors.” Was the preservation of the life of the high-priest, after he had offered and entered into the presence of God, a token of the legal acceptableness of the sacrifice ? The resurrection, ascension, and eternal life of Jesus, as our interceding High-priest, afford the most full and satisfactory evidence of the perfection of his oblation.

From the history of atonement, it is clear that God will not *pard*on sin without a satisfaction to his justice. From the beginning he would not be worshipped without blood, that he might demonstrate to the Church the indispensable necessity of expiation. As all her sacrifices were unacceptable without faith, she was taught that they had no worth in themselves for taking away sin. As the faith required, was that which looked forward to the sacrifice of “ the Prince of life ;” she was also instructed in the necessity of an atonement of infinite value.

We have at the same time a wonderful display of the *grace* of God. This might be illustrated in a variety of respects. Let one suffice at present. He often informed his worshippers, that he had no delight in the sacrifices of slain beasts. When his design in appointing them was overlooked, he expressed his detestation at these very sacrifices which he had himself required. Yet, for about four thousand years, he accepted these, granting pardon and eternal life to all who offered them in faith. He bestowed all new-covenant blessings on his people, according to the nature of the dispensation, on the credit of that real atonement which was to be made in the end of ages. The sacrifice of Christ, as it was necessary for the actual purchase of redemption, was also necessary for the vindication of the essential justice of God. Hence it is said, that God hath set forth his Son “ to be a propitiation “ through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the “ remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God ; “ to declare at this time his righteousness, that he might be just” to the claims of his own adorable perfections, and yet “ the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.”ⁿ

SECTION XIV.

The Doctrine of Imputation illustrated,—from the Raiment provided for our First Parents, after the Fall ;—from the Guilty being legally accounted Innocent, in consequence of ceremonial Atonement ;—from the ancient Custom of Feasting on the Sacrifice ;—from the manner in which Salvation was conferred on Believers under the Old Testament.

WITH the doctrines of Substitution and Atonement, which we have already considered, that of Imputation is most intimately

connected. All the three, indeed, are just links of one precious chain. Guilt is imputed to a substitute, that atonement may be made ; atonement is made, that the righteousness procured by it may be imputed to him for whom the punishment was sustained. Thus the guilt of all the elect was imputed to Christ as their Surety. In this character he paid their debt, that his righteousness might be legally accounted theirs. Of this important article of our faith, we have not only a doctrinal, but an historical and symbolical, exhibition.

1. This was taught by the *raiment* which God provided for our first parents, after they had sinned. "Unto Adam, also, and to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." Here several things deserve our attention.

This raiment was made of *skins*. It has been generally supposed, that the skins referred to were those of the beasts which our common parents offered in sacrifice, after the revelation of mercy. The passage indeed has been viewed as a proof of the divine institution of sacrifices, immediately after the fall.—There is every reason for viewing it in this light, when we consider the character of Christ as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world ;" and what has been formerly observed concerning Abel's acceptable sacrifice. He could not have "offered of the firstlings of the flock—by faith," without a divine warrant ; and it is totally improbable that Abel should have been the first who presented an offering of this kind.

The circumstance of God's *making* these garments for them, is very remarkable. This is the only raiment that God himself ever made. But he never works in vain. It was not necessary, that He should deign to perform this work, as if it had been too difficult for them. Although they had needed direction, he could easily have given it. But they had already manifested their ingenuity in "sewing fig-leaves together," for a covering.^a We must conclude, therefore, that this act of divine condescension was meant to convey spiritual instruction ; that it was a token of his acceptance of their sacrifices, and of his accounting them as innocent as the victims they had offered, as their faith, by means of these, terminated on the spotless innocence of the promised seed. We must view this act of God as a symbolical, but solemn, testimony, that he had provided for them "a robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation."—Did "the Lord God make" this covering ? And is not the raiment, provided for us in the gospel, "the righteousness of God ?" Is it not a righteousness fulfilled by a divine Person ?

This covering was made by God, *instead* of that which our first parents had themselves provided. It may thus be viewed as expressive of the excellency of our Redeemer's righteousness, as op-

posed to our own ; and as denoting the gracious work which God performs towards the vessels of mercy, in bringing them to renounce all their righteousnesses as filthy rags. They “made themselves *aprons*” only ; but God “made them *coats*.” This might be meant to signify both the extent of their guilt, and of the Surety-righteousness of Jesus. They looked only to the bodily nakedness, and provided a covering for those parts alone, over which modesty draws a veil. But God testifies at once the imperfection of their views, and of their raiment. He declares that the whole man is defiled by sin, and that we cannot appear before him, without raiment that shall completely cover us. For any covering that the sinner can provide for himself, is “narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.”^q Their aprons were of *fig-leaves*, and therefore could neither defend them from the storm, nor last for any length of time. The coats that God made were of *skins* ; and fitly represented that righteousness, which proves a complete defence, and which endures for ever. By this gracious action, then, our divine Surety, who appeared in Paradise after the fall, symbolically supplied them with “white raiment, that they might be clothed, and that “the shame of their nakedness might not appear.”^r

This covering was provided for *both*. “Unto Adam, and to “his wife, did the Lord God make coats.” Had he meant merely to instruct them in the proper mode of providing a covering for their bodily nakedness, or defending themselves from the inclemency of the weather ; it had been enough to make raiment for one, and thus to leave an excitement to diligence. But here also we perceive the mystery of the divine conduct in this action. Both had sinned, and thus lost the garment of original righteousness ; therefore, both needed a complete covering. Both believed the promise concerning the seed of the woman, and in the faith of this promise, concurred in offering sacrifice ; both, therefore, received the same token of acceptance. “The righteousness “of God,” which this raiment prefigured, “is unto all and upon “all them that believe ; for there is no difference. For all have “sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”^s Here “there “is neither male nor female ; for we are all one in Christ Jesus.”

The Lord God not only made these coats for our first parents, but *clothed* them. This doubtless prefigured that work which our gracious God still performs, when he “justifieth the ungod-“ly.” He it is who clothes them with the garments of salvation, who covers them with the robe of righteousness.^u It is not enough that he hath made this garment for us, and brought it near in the gospel. Still will we prefer our wretched coverings of fig-leaves, unless God himself put it on us. It is the work of the Father, in his economical character as “the Judge of all,” to impute the righteousness of the Surety to the sinner, legally

^q Isa. xxviii. 20.

^r Gal. iii. 28.

^s Rev. iii. 13.

^u Isa. lxi. 10.

^s Rom. iii. 22, 23.

to account it his. It is the work of Christ, as our Kinsman-Redeemer, to cast his skirt over us.^v This gracious work he performs in relation to his church, as he testifies to her; "When I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was a time of love, and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness."^w

It was in consequence of the *faith* of our first parents, that they were thus covered. When it is said, "Unto Adam *also*, and to his wife, did the Lord God make coats," there may be a reference, in this connective particle, to the promise previously revealed, as well as to their faith. For in the verse immediately preceding, we are informed, that "Adam called his wife *Eve*, because she was the mother of all living;" and this surely expresses his faith in the promise of life by the seed of the woman; and signifies, that he viewed her as the mother of all who should be made alive unto God. For, otherwise, he might rather have called her the mother of all dying; in correspondence with the account elsewhere given of himself.^x Now, it is only by faith that we are interested in this righteousness. It is indeed put upon us by God. But it is "upon them" only "that believe." Therefore it is said to be "by the faith of Jesus Christ."^y

Here I shall only observe further, that this whole transaction, both of Adam's offering sacrifice, and of God's clothing him with the skins, has been viewed as the origin of that ordinance afterwards given to the Israelites; The priest "that offereth any man's burnt-offering, even the priest shall have to himself the *skin* of the burnt-offering which he hath offered."^z

II. He, who according to the law had been formerly accounted a *transgressor*, was, in consequence of the instituted atonement, *legally viewed as innocent*. What was done by the priest, with respect to leprosy, seems to have a special respect to the blessing of justification. He was to pronounce the person clean or unclean. Now, justification is a legal declaration, that a person is righteous in the sight of God. Even when the plague was already healed, the priest could not pronounce him clean who had been leprous, until he made atonement for him by blood.^a Seven times was he to sprinkle blood "upon him that was to be cleansed;" which signified the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to the sinner, and the *perfection* of his justification, in consequence of this sprinkling. The rite of sprinkling is indeed generally understood, as if it had exclusively denoted our sanctification; but improperly, we apprehend. For the blood of Christ is called "the blood of sprinkling," and said to "speak better things" than that of Abel; where its justifying efficacy is evidently meant, as opposed to the condemning cry of the other. And when the blood of Christ, as typified by "the blood of bulls and of goats," is

^v Ruth iii. 9.
^y Rom. iii. 22.

^w Ezek. xvi. 8.
^z Lev. vii. 8.

^x 1Cor. xv. 22.
^a Chap. xiv. 7.

said to "purge our conscience from dead works;"^b justification is intended as well as sanctification: for these works, as dead, are not only defiling, but damning.

Was the priest not only to make atonement for the leper, but to pronounce him clean? This fitly represents the work of our royal High-priest, who is exalted "to give—forgiveness of sins."^c He not only pronounces the spiritual leper clean; but he does so, in consequence of an act of his own sovereign pleasure. He says, "I will, be thou clean."^d

When sacrifice was offered for all Israel, the legal innocence of the victim is represented as imputed to the whole congregation. Hence, with respect to the day of atonement, it is said; "On that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD."^e

III. The professors of religion were, in various instances, admitted to *feast* on the *sacrifices* they had offered unto God. This was a token of the acceptance of their persons as legally justified through the imputation of the innocence of the victims whose blood they have shed. This, it would appear, was a very ancient custom. When Jacob entered into a covenant with Laban, he "offered sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread."^f As a solemn pledge of complete reconciliation, they ate together of what had been offered in sacrifice. Some indeed suppose, that the language means no more than that Jacob killed some of his herd or flock for a feast. But the expression literally is, he "sacrificed a sacrifice;" which cannot, consistently with its ordinary use, be understood of preparation for a common meal. Before the law was given from Sinai, we find Aaron and the elders of Israel feasting in a religious manner on that sacrifice of thanksgiving, which had been made by Jethro the father-in-law of Moses.^g By the law, it was provided that the people should feast on the peace-offerings, in that place which God was to select for the permanent residence of his sanctuary.^h All the Israelites, who were not legally unclean, were, according to divine appointment, to feast on the paschal lamb, which had been offered to God in sacrifice, as a figure of Christ. Now, this privilege was a token of divine acceptance, through the sacrifice, as prefiguring that which should be offered for the actual expiation of sin. Something better is conferred on us. Because "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" we are called to "keep the feast," by faith to feed on him, to eat and drink his blood: and this is given us as a seal of all spiritual blessings, and especially of the imputation of his righteousness. For "this cup," saith Christ, "is the New Testament in my blood, shed for many, for the remission of sins."

^b Heb. ix. 14, 15.

^c Acts v. 31.

^d Matt. viii. 3.

^e Lev. xvi. 30.

^f Gen. xxxi. 54.

^g Exod. xviii. 12.

^h Lev. vii. 15.; Deut. xxii. 5, 7.

iv. All the patriarchs and saints under the Old Testament were *saved by imputation*. This is evident from their history, as recorded in both parts of the sacred canon ; and especially from the beautiful and striking compend given of it in the Epistle to the Hebrews. They were saved, not by their own works, but by faith, as contradistinguished from them all. This their faith respected a revealed righteousness, a righteousness without them, totally different from any internal work of the Spirit, or external holiness. They were not saved by their sacrifices, as if these in themselves had been worthy of divine acceptance ; nor by the act of sacrificing, as an act of obedience to the letter of God's commandment ; but by means of faith, as respecting a better sacrifice a perfect and everlasting righteousness. Noah was an " heir of " the righteousness which is by faith." ⁱ Abraham " believed God, " and it was counted unto him for righteousness," or as afterwards, " it was imputed to him for righteousness." ^k This can only be understood of faith, as embracing the righteousness of the promised seed ; not of faith as itself constituting the righteousness of Abraham. For this would directly oppose the whole current of the Apostle's reasoning. This would be to convert faith into a legal work ; to make justification an act of God respecting men as *godly* because of their believing ; to exhibit the reward as, not of grace, but of debt. When it is said, that Noah " became an heir of the righteousness which is by faith," the very language used implies, that this righteousness is essentially distinct from all that which constitutes our sanctification. A man is not said to " become an heir " of what he hath himself acquired. This expression denotes a legal transmission from another, of what is not primarily one's own. The language respects an adoption, proceeding wholly from grace, of those who are naturally aliens ; and their admission through faith to a participation of that justifying righteousness which is " unto all, and upon all " them that believe."

" Blessed " indeed " is the man to whom the LORD imputeth " not iniquity ! " May it be our great concern, and our distinguishing privilege, to partake of this blessedness ! But it can be ours, only as enabled from the heart to renounce all our righteousnesses as filthy rags, and to say in faith, " Surely in JEHOVAH have " I righteousness."

ⁱ Heb. xi. 7.

^k Rom. iv. 4, 5, 22.

SECTION XV.

The Necessity of Almighty Power for changing the Heart, illustrated from the History of Creation ;—from the inefficacy of the severest Judgments ;—from the history of the promised seed ;—from the nature of the Victories obtained by Israel ;—from their being still taught to depend solely on God ;—from some Circumstances attending the rebuilding of the Temple ;—from the personal Ministry of Jesus.

EVERY man, who has carefully and impartially read the Holy Scriptures, must have remarked, that it is evidently the intention of the Spirit of inspiration, to prove in a variety of ways the inefficacy of external means, and to shew the indispensable necessity of almighty power in changing the hearts of men. This is done, not merely of professed design, but often as it were incidentally. As the light of divine truth, with respect to this important subject, beams forth with the greatest lustre, in the express doctrines of revelation ; many of its precious rays are scattered through the history of the Church, and illuminate even the shadows which in part concealed her beauty during the early period of her existence.

1. This doctrine is illustrated by the history of creation. It is said perhaps, What hath the original creation of man to do with his salvation from a state of sin ? But the connexion is very intimate. The work of God, in the renovation of the heart, is in Scripture frequently represented as a new creation. “ We “ are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.”[†] “ If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation.”^m This inspired language remits us to the history of the first creation, as exhibiting the pattern of the second.

All things were made of nothing. There was no pre-existent matter. This fitly represents the natural state of man, as ruined by sin. He hath no actual life, no latent principle of life, or disposition towards it. Or shall we view creation in its first appearance, when “ the earth was without form and void,” or empty ; when “ darkness was upon the face of the deep ?” Have we not here a striking representation of the natural situation of the soul ? It appears “ without form,” totally disordered ; the inferior faculties ruling over the superior ; the will and affections trampling on the understanding and conscience, spurning all their dictates, and threatening the eternal destruction of the sinner. It is “ empty” of every thing, that God calls good. Vanity is the predominant character of the mind.ⁿ As the soul resembles “ the troubled sea,” it is covered with gross darkness ; with the darkness of ignorance, of error, and of prejudice.

† Eph. ii. 10.

m 2 Cor. v. 17.

n Eph. iv. 18.

What was the first work of God in giving form to the confused mass? He created light. This is the very method of his procedure in the new creation. He makes light to enter into the benighted understanding.

In what manner were all things created? How did light receive its being from God? Was it not by a word of almighty power? "He spake, and it was done: He said, Let light be, and light was." This mode of operation, peculiar to omnipotence, is particularly marked by the Apostle as characterizing the new creation. It is marked with a special reference to the old; as evidently denoting that the same almighty power is not less necessary in the one, than it was in the other. "God, who *commanded* the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." He not only made light to shine by a word of power, but made it to shine "out of darkness." In what a lively manner does this express the work of God in conversion! He still shows that he is that God, who "callesth the things that be not as though they were." He directs his efficacious word to the sinner who is in gross darkness, and makes him "light in the Lord." He says, "Look ye blind;" and at his word they see.

In the first creation, "God divided the light from the darkness." For even after the formation of light, the darkness was not totally dispelled. Thus, in the Christian, two contrary principles remain. But the light is so divided from the darkness, that the former can never be extinguished by the latter.

Were the evening and the morning one day? So is it in the new creation. The evening, the imperfect state of grace in the present life, a state partly clear and partly dark, and the morning of glory at the resurrection, make but one day to the renewed soul. The day of glory hath dawned. He is "changed from glory to glory." His present life, as "hid with Christ," is not substantially different from that which awaits him in heaven. For as he hath the Son, he hath life, even life for evermore. He, who is himself "the Resurrection," says; "I *give* unto them eternal life."

Each Person of the godhead was engaged in the creation of the world. The Father created all things by the Son. The Holy Spirit "moved," with an incubating power, "on the face of the waters," communicating life. In like manner, "we are the workmanship of God, created again in *Christ Jesus*. It is "the Spirit that quickeneth. Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Was man created by God in his image, after his likeness?—The same work is performed, the same power is necessary, in

the new creation. For "the new man is renewed in knowledge, "after the image of him that created him."^h

11. This necessity also appears from the *inefficacy* of the severest judgments, that have ever been inflicted on men, with respect to any real change. Could any dispensation towards mankind be more awful, or in more expressive characters declare the hatefulness of sin, than the universal deluge? Yet so obdurate was the heart of Ham, that scarcely were the waters of destruction dried up, ere he "made a mock at sin," and considered that instance of human imperfection as matter of profane sport, which should have covered him with blushes.^g How great, and how general was the corruption of the posterity of Noah, even during his own life! He might have seen Terah, the father of Abraham; and we may believe that he still retained the character of "a preacher of righteousness," and continued to remind his descendants of the procuring cause of the deluge. Yet before his decease, many of them had apostatized from the true God.

It deserves our particular attention indeed, that what in one place is given as the reason of the deluge, is in another given as the reason why there should never be a second destruction of a similar kind. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great "in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his "heart was only evil continually.—And the LORD said, I will "destroy man, whom I have created.—I will destroy them with "the earth."^r After the deluge, "the LORD said in his heart, "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; "for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth."^s—Shall it be imagined that the Spirit of revelation can contradict himself? Or that He, who "is of one mind," should be "turned" to another? Or, that God tried this destruction as an experiment, and determined never to try it again, because it did not answer his purpose? Far be such thoughts from us, as derogatory in the highest degree from the perfection of the only wise God! Whence, then, is the same thing mentioned as the reason of modes of procedure diametrically opposite? This striking connexion, which might at first view appear as a contradiction, lets us know, that God had a twofold design in the deluge; that while he was pleased thus to manifest his detestation of sin, it was at the same time his pleasure to shew that the most tremendous judgments cannot change the heart of rebellious man. To declare what sin deserves, he calls for a deluge; and to proclaim the incorrigible nature of the disease, he promises a future exemption from this judgment.

The shocking impurity of the daughters of Lot may be viewed as an illustration of the same truth. Some writers have endeavoured to extenuate their guilt, by supposing that they might

^h Col. iii. 10. Vid. Wits. Oecon. p. 640.

^r Chap. vi. 5, 7, 13.

^g Gen. ix. 22.

^s Chap. viii. 21.

reckon the race of men extinct, in consequence of that destruction from which they had escaped ; or, that they were actuated by an earnest desire, and perhaps by hope, that the one or other of them might be the mother of the promised seed. But their conduct undoubtedly shows, how little they were affected by the destruction of the cities of the plain. For they were not deterred, even by this awful judgment, from the commission of a crime, which, as being against nature, partook of the general character of that by which their former fellow-citizens were marked out as monuments of divine vengeance.

Here I might also mention the obstinacy of Israel in rebellion, both in the wilderness, and in the land of promise, notwithstanding the many and awful judgments executed on them. This is illustrated in a very striking manner, in the twentieth chapter of Ezekiel. Let us for a moment advert to what has been formerly mentioned. Two hundred and fifty princes, who intruded themselves into the office of the priesthood, had been destroyed by "fire from the Lord;" the earth had opened her mouth, and swallowed up the company of Korah: yet "*on the morrow* all the congregation of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron," and were "gathered against them," with this impious language in their mouths; "Ye have killed the people of the Lord." While they accuse Moses and Aaron of sacrilegious murder, they mean to accuse God himself, as if he had acted a cruel and unjust part towards his faithful people. Can any thing more impressively declare the dreadful obstinacy of man, in rebellion against God, when left to the ways of his own heart; or the insufficiency of any outward means to reclaim him?

III. The necessity of an efficacious operation on the heart, may also be illustrated from the history of the *promised seed*. God had not only promised to Abraham, that he should have a son, but sworn that "in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed." Abraham waited long for the completion of the promise; still expecting it according to the course of nature. But it was twenty-five years after the promise was first made, ere it was accomplished.^t God was pleased to exercise the faith and patience of the Patriarch, till all hope of his being a father, according to the ordinary course of nature, was gone. He had a son, indeed, born to him while he was yet in his strength. But he was informed that this was not the promised child, but that in Isaac his seed should be called. Well might his son be designed "the child of promise;" not only as his birth was matter of promise long before it took place, and as the blessing was to descend in the line of his posterity, he being the destined progenitor of the seed of the woman; but especially because he was born, not according to the common course of nature, but by virtue of the promise. "He who was of the bond-woman"

^t Gen. xii. 4.; xxi. 5.

sand. But "the LORD said to Gideon, The people are yet too many." Accordingly they were reduced to three hundred. Those, to whom the honourable work of delivering Israel was assigned, are brought so low, as to have a dog's mark set on them. For those only, who, in drinking of the water, "lapped, as a dog lappeth," were chosen as the instruments of this deliverance.^d The only arms with which these men were provided, were trumpets with pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers. We have no evidence that a sword was drawn by one of them, or that a single sword was left among all the three hundred. For that expression, which was their word of war, "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon," is entirely metaphorical. They were to "stand still and see the salvation of the LORD their God." They were to use no other means of victory than to blow the trumpets, to break the pitchers, and to cry as instructed by their captain. They had no other weapons than—"lamps in their left hands, and trumpets in their right hands to blow withal." But by means of these they obtained a complete victory over their enemies. For "the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow."

Here we have a most striking representation of the manner in which the enemies of Christ are made to fall under him. It is not by the sword of civil power, by the force of human eloquence, or by the influence of moral suasion. In general he employs not the mighty, the noble, or the wise in this warfare; "lest Israel should vaunt themselves." It is still a cake of barley-bread, that overturns the tents of Midian. When the trumpet of the gospel is blown, sinners are awakened; and according to the promise, Christ gives them light. Thus the apostle Paul, when speaking of the efficacy attending the gospel, says; "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure," that is, the inestimable treasure of this divine light, "in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."^e Poor sinful men, however, may engage in this work, only as receiving his commission. No one can expect any success, but in as far as the language of God to Gideon is applicable to him; "Have not I sent thee?"

Shamgar, the son of Anath, slew six hundred Philistines with an ox-goad, and thus delivered Israel.^f Samson slew a thousand of the same hostile nation with the jaw-bone of an ass.^g By means of a smooth stone out of the brook, thrown from a sling, the stripling David afterwards slew their gigantic champion, who had defied the armies of the living God.^h These were striking proofs of the contemptible character of the means which God employs, for carrying on his conquests in the Church, and over

^d Jud. vii. 2—7.

^g Chap. xv. 15.

^e 2 Cor. iv. 5, 7.

^h 1 Sam. xvii. 40, 49.

^f Jud. iii. 31.

her enemies. The proud Philistine disdained David because of his youth, and was filled with indignation at the despicable equipment of his antagonist, as an insult to his own power, and as robbing him of every shadow of honour in that conquest about which he did not entertain a single doubt. "Am I a dog," said he, "that thou comest against me with staves?" But David knew that all the human means he could use were inadequate to such a victory. His confidence was therefore wholly in divine power. To Saul he said, "The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." To him also David said, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day the LORD will deliver thee into mine hand.—that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the LORD *saveth not with sword and spear.*" The following reflection is made by the inspired writer of this history: "So David prevailed over the Philistine, with a sling, and with a stone;—but there was no sword in the hand of David." As David was an eminent type of Christ, the manner in which he obtained this victory, remarkably prefigured the conquests of his Son and Lord. Did David cut off the head of Goliath with his own sword? Jesus foiled Satan on the cross; and "by death destroyed him that had the power of death." David went forth to battle, with a staff, and with a stone. As Jesus is himself the "stone cut out of the mountain without hands;" the word of the gospel is "the rod of his strength," by which he rules in the midst of his enemies, and the staff by means of which he guides, sustains, comforts, and protects his people.

v. God taught his ancient Israel to have all their *dependence on himself*. Some notice has been taken of this in a former part of the work: but it deserves our particular attention here. When they were about to enter into the promised land, he put them in mind that they had no power in themselves to subdue the nations that possessed it. "Hear, O Israel, thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven; a people great and tall, the children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the children of Anak? Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God is he which goeth over before thee as a consuming fire: he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face.—Speak not in thine heart, after that the LORD thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the LORD hath brought me in to possess this land:

1 Sam. xvii. 37, 45, 47, 50. k Dan. ii. 34, 45. l Psal. cx. 2; xxiii. 14.

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"but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee."^m He in the strongest terms expresses his displeasure at carnal confidence: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD."ⁿ On this account he often punished his people with the greatest severity, and made the very object of their confidence the instrument of their destruction. "Wo to the rebellious children, saith the LORD,—that walk to go down into Egypt, (and have not asked at my mouth,) to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt. Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion.—They were all ashamed of a people that could not profit them, nor be an help nor profit, but a shame, and also a reproach."^o

These warnings, denunciations and punishments had all a further reference. They indeed immediately respected the literal Israel; and declared their guilt in trusting in any arm, save that which had been so remarkably displayed in their deliverance and protection. But as the temporal salvations given to this people prefigured the everlasting salvation of all the spiritual Israel, the means employed by God to deter them from trusting in an arm of flesh, whether their own or that of any other nation, were ultimately and especially designed to declare the sin and danger of carnal confidence in any shape, as opposed to confidence in that salvation exhibited in the gospel. Hence we find the language, originally appropriated to the guilt of trusting in man for temporal deliverance, transferred to the New Testament, and used to express the still more aggravated iniquity of self-righteousness, or trust in external privileges: "We are the circumcision, who—rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."^p Nor can we rightly read the language of the Spirit of God, on this subject, in the Old Testament, without understanding it as especially "written for our admonition," that we may "not trust in ourselves, but in him that raiseth the dead."

vi. Some of the circumstances attending the rebuilding of the temple, after the return of the Jews from their captivity, afford a similar illustration. The very opposition made by their enemies was overruled for the advancement of this work. They did every thing to instigate the supreme authority against that afflicted handful. But the truth of that declaration was manifested; "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; and he turneth it whithersoever he will." For "he turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of the LORD, the God of Israel."^q Were some in danger of "despising the day of small things," because the glory

^m Deut. ix. 1—4.

^p Phil. iii. 3.

ⁿ Jer. xvii. 5.

^q Ezra vi. 22.

^o Isa. xxx. 1—5.

of this building was so far inferior to that of the former? Or, were they ready to conclude, that, because of the many obstacles thrown in their way, it would never be finished? God sent them a message both of comfort and of reproof, expressive of the manner in which his work is conducted in every age; "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." Concerning Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, he delivers that gracious declaration, which could only have its full accomplishment in the glorious Antitype: "Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel a plain, a plain! and he shall bring forth the head-stone thereof with shoutings, Grace, grace unto it."^r

VII. In proof of the indispensable necessity of divine power for the salvation of sinners, may I not appeal to the *personal ministry* of our LORD? The great salvation "began to be spoken" by him. He "spake as never man spake." Nothing but truth proceeded from his lips. He "spake the words of God." What he had "seen and heard, that he testified."^s His enemies were often silenced, and at times captivated by his discourses. He confirmed his doctrines by the most astonishing miracles, such as they could neither disprove nor deny. Yet "no man received his testimony." He had reason to complain, that he had "laboured in vain," and that Israel was "not gathered." "His own received him not." He wept over Jerusalem, saying, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."

What was the design of this, but to teach us, that human suasion, even in its highest possible perfection, is unavailing? It was the will of God, that the personal ministry of Christ himself should be attended with comparatively little efficacy; to illustrate the necessity of divine power, and to put honour on the ministration of the Spirit. According to the pleasure of the three-one God, all the efficacy of the gospel must immediately proceed from the third Person of the adorable Trinity. It must therefore appear, that the word, as spoken by the human lip of Jesus himself, could be effectual only in as far as it was accompanied by the power of the Spirit. The effusion of the Holy Ghost was therefore withheld, till the personal ministry of Christ was at an end. But when the disciples received "power from on high," a single sermon, preached by one of them, was attended with far greater success than the whole of Christ's ministry.

Hath God in such a variety of ways declared the inefficacy of means, and the necessity of Almighty power in order to the salvation of man? Let us beware of saying, "Mine own arm hath saved me." It is evident from the whole history of the Church,

that it hath still been the design of God, in working salvation, to stain the pride of human glory. Why should we stumble at this stone? If it was the pleasure of JEHOVAH, that boasting should be excluded in all the temporal deliverances of his people; can we rationally suppose, that he will admit them to a partnership with himself, either in the accomplishment, or in the glory, of that salvation which is the chief of all his works? Would he exclude them from the mere sign, and give them a distinguished co-operation in the thing signified? Let us view the language of his ancient people, as descriptive of the exercise of all his spiritual Israel. Let us transfer to the heavenly Canaan, what they uttered concerning the earthly: "We got not the land in possession by our own sword, neither did our own arm save us: but thy right-hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto us."¹

SECTION XVI.

The Doctrine of Particular Redemption illustrated from the First Promise;—from the Temporal Redemptions of Israel;—from the Limitation of the legal Oblations;—from the History of Redemption as accomplished by Christ.

THAT our Lord did not die for all mankind, but for a certain number whom the Father from eternity gave to him, is evident not only from a great variety of doctrinal testimonies, but from the whole history of the Church.

1. This truth is discernible in the very dawn of revelation. It is distinctly written in the first gospel-promise.² There we have a distinction marked between two different seeds. The one is designed the *seed* of the *woman*; the other, the *seed* of the *serpent*. As Adam, after the revelation of this promise, called Eve "the mother of all living," because he in the exercise of faith viewed her as the mother of all those who should be made alive unto God; by the *seed* of the *woman* we are to understand Christ mystical, Christ the head, and all his spiritual seed considered as in him. Now, this seed is expressly distinguished from that of the serpent. Who, then, can these be but the reprobate world left to perish in their sins? Doth God say, "I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed?" This enmity, then, must be mutual. The testimony of God implies, on the one hand, that he permits the seed of the serpent to continue under the power of that natural enmity against Christ and his seed, which is the fruit of their original apostacy in Adam; and, on the other, that he actually implants a principle of enmity in the hearts of the

¹ Psal. xliv. 3.

² Gen. iii. 15.

seed of the woman against the devil and his interests. This he does, in communicating the gracious principle of supreme love to himself. For we cannot love God without hating Satan and his works. Enmity against this old serpent necessarily takes place of our natural "enmity against God." Such is the state of matters with respect to the members of Christ's mystical body, and can we suppose that it is reversed as to the Head? Does God put enmity between them and the seed of the serpent; and hath Christ the same love to them that he hath to his own seed? Does not the promise respect him as well as his members? How then can he be an adversary to the seed of the serpent, and yet die for their salvation? In consequence of this enmity, does Christ bruise the *head* of the serpent; and from the same principle, does he purchase redemption for all his *seed*? The very contrary, surely. In the bruising of his head, we have an awful prelude of their eternal destruction, as adherents to his devoted interests, and as irreconcilable enemies to the Redeemer.

The Apostle Paul teaches us the same doctrine, when explaining the promise made to Abraham. "He saith not, And to 'seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is 'Christ.'^x Here he speaks of Christ mystical, as including the Head himself, and all his spiritual seed; who are called "the 'seed of Abraham," to what nation soever they belong; as being eventually made partakers of like precious faith, and interested in the blessings of that covenant which was revealed to him. But the promise would be to *seeds*, in the strangest sense conceivable; if the blessing promised, an everlasting salvation, had been purchased for the seed of the serpent, no less than for the seed of the woman.

II. The same doctrine receives the fullest elucidation from the *temporal* redemptions of *Israel*. That these were meant as successive figures of the spiritual salvation of the Church, is so evident as scarcely to require illustration. They are all exhibited as branches of his great work of mercy towards her, and as confirmations of his covenant with Abraham, which covenant had a special respect to spiritual and eternal blessings. "He sent redemption unto his people, he hath commanded his covenant for ever.—He remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his 'servant. And he brought forth his people with joy; and his 'chosen with gladness."^y This is the very language used with respect to our salvation by Christ. "Blessed be the LORD God 'of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people:—to 'remember his holy covenant, the oath which he sware to our 'father Abraham."^z These figurative redemptions were all accomplished by the same divine Person, who at length gave himself a ransom. "The Angel of his presence saved them." They contained a display of the same divine and gracious characters:

^x Gal. iii. 16. ^y Psal. cxi. 9; cv. 42, 43. ^z Luke i. 68, 72, 73.

that it hath still been the design of God, in working salvation, to stain the pride of human glory. Why should we stumble at this stone ? If it was the pleasure of JEHOVAH, that boasting should be excluded in all the temporal deliverances of his people ; can we rationally suppose, that he will admit them to a partnership with himself, either in the accomplishment, or in the glory, of that salvation which is the chief of all his works ? Would he exclude them from the mere sign, and give them a distinguished co-operation in the thing signified ? Let us view the language of his ancient people, as descriptive of the exercise of all his spiritual Israel. Let us transfer to the heavenly Canaan, what they uttered concerning the earthly : “ We got not the land in possession by our own sword, neither did our own arm save us : but thy right-hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto us.”

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"In his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them, all the days of old."^a They were also, as shall be seen, procured in the way of purchase.

The redemption of Israel was entirely of a *particular* kind ; and in this respect a shadow of our redemption by Christ. None but the seed of Jacob were partakers of this mercy. Hence David says ; "What one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to *redeem* for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things, and terrible, for thy land, before thy people which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?"^b Similar is the language of Moses ; "Thou in mercy hast led forth thy people which thou hast redeemed."^c

This was wholly the fruit of *distinguishing* love. *Love* and *redemption* are terms used in Scripture as correlates. We never read of God's redeeming a people, even in a temporal respect, but as the fruit of love to them as a peculiar people : and the redemption is always limited according to the extent of this love. "Because he *loved* thy fathers, therefore—he *brought thee out* in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt."^d

This typical redemption, so far from being extended to others, was conferred on Israel at their *expense*. When he saved them, the nations that were in a state of enmity were destroyed. He bought them as his peculiar people with the price of blood ; and thus gave a striking emblem of the means by which he should, in the fulness of time, redeem all his chosen people. In this sense is it said that they were *purchased* ; as the Israelites sung with respect to the Egyptians : "Fear and dread shall fall upon them ; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone : till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased."^e To the same purpose JEHOVAH, when revealing himself in the character of a Saviour, reminds his peculiar people of this wonderful evidence of his love : "I am the LORD thy God, the holy one of Israel, thy saviour ;"—not the saviour of Egypt, but in a way of distinction, nay of exclusion, thy saviour. And how does he prove his claim to this character?—"I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honoured, and I have loved thee : therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life." The meaning of the promise here added is clear from what follows : "Thus saith the LORD your Redeemer, the holy one of Israel, For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and brought down all their nobles."^f Afterwards, when he hath pointed out Cyrus by name, and particularly described the redemption to be accomplished by his instrumentality, he shows the special design of all this work, in the call given to

^a Isa. lxiii. 9.

^b 2 Sam. vii. 23.

^c Exod. xv. 13.

^d Deut. iv. 37.

^e Exod. xv. 16.

^f Isa. lxiii. 3, 4, 14.

sinners of every nation to believe in him as a spiritual Redeemer :
 " Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." *g*

So clearly was the character of redemption impressed on the whole of God's conduct towards the Israelites, that it does not merely distinguish the termination of their controversy with the Egyptians at the Red Sea, but the preceding events. Every plague, which was inflicted upon Egypt, in the limitation assigned to it, marked out the Israelites as a peculiar people. Thus where we read, with respect to the flies, " I will put a division," the expression signifies ; " I will put a *redemption* between my " people and thy people." *h*

This was remarkably the case as to the destruction of the first-born. When the LORD smote all the first-born of the Egyptians, he delivered the houses of the Israelites. But in order to this deliverance, it was necessary that they should be typically redeemed by the blood of the paschal lamb : " When he seeth the " blood, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the " destroyer to come into your houses to smite you." What an awful distinction was here made ! " He *smote* the Egyptians, and " *delivered* our houses." *i* Ever after, the Israelites were to redeem their first-born by paying a price for them : " All the first-
 " born of man among thy children shalt thou redeem." Therefore they are said to be all sanctified unto the LORD. *k*

Both this temporal deliverance, and the ordinances commemorating it, undoubtedly prefigured the eternal redemption of the seed of Christ, by the inestimable price of his blood, " as of a " lamb without blemish." Hence they are denominated " the " church of the first-born." Like those of Israel, they are a select company, whom the Lord hath set apart for himself.

III. This is also evident from the *limitation* of the legal *oblations*. I do not speak of those which were presented in the name of individuals, but of such as respected the whole congregation of Israel. Of this nature were the morning and evening sacrifices, those which were offered on the great day of atonement, and a variety of others. None, who believe the doctrine of Christ's atonement, deny that these were instituted types of his death as the true sacrifice for sin. But none can consistently acknowledge this, and yet affirm that he died for all men. For all these typical oblations, while made for the whole congregation of Israel, were made for them only. The sacrifices were offered up for all Israel ; but only as prefiguring the efficacy of the death of Christ, as extending to all the chosen people which constitute the true Israel. The strangers, who received any benefit from the legal oblations, were such only as clave to the Israelites. The sacrifices had no respect to the nations around. They were ex-

g Isa. xlv. 22.

i Chap. xii. 23, 27,

h Exod. viii. 22.

k Chap. xiii. 2, 13.

pressly excluded from the congregation of the LORD. Now, if these sacrifices prefigured the atonement to be made by Christ, if at the same time they were limited to the congregation of Israel ; his expiation must also be limited as to its objects, else there is no consonancy between the shadow and the substance.

iv. The same thing might be fully demonstrated from the history of *redemption* as accomplished by *Christ*. From the account that himself gives of the intention of his death, it is clear that he did not die for all. He said, "I lay down my life for the sheep.^f These are evidently a definite number, separated from the rest of mankind. For he distinguishes them, in the description given, from wolves and hirelings, and from others to whom he says "Ye are not of my sheep. He assigns it as one proof of his being the good Shepherd, that he *knows* his sheep.^l Now, if by these he meant all mankind, why were they thus distinguished, or what merit was there in knowing them, when there could be no mistake, unless devils had been mistaken for men. The extent of his death is so clearly defined in his intercessory prayer, that it seems inconceivable that any one should err on this subject, without obstinately rejecting the light. Although Jesus had power over all flesh, yet it was to be exercised in conferring eternal life on those only whom the Father had given him. For such only did he pray, in contradistinction from the world. For them only did he set himself apart as a sacrifice, and consecrate himself by his sufferings to the work of an interceding High-priest.^m—But on these things I enlarge not ; as they have been often fully illustrated by others, who have written professedly on this subject.

From the observations made, we may perceive how intimately the various branches of the system of error are connected. Deists and Arminians in fact stumble on one stone. The former ridicule the Scriptures, and deny that they are a divine revelation, because they represent God as limiting his love to one nation, to the exclusion of all the rest of the world. The latter reject the very same doctrine in another form, not indeed as respecting any particular nation, but in reference to particular persons. The Deist stumbles at the doctrine of the literal, the Arminian at that of the spiritual, Israel. Both are shocked at the idea of divine sovereignty, and deny that God hath a right to do with his own what seemeth him good.

^f John x. 12—15, 26, 27.

^m Chap. xvii. 2, 9, 19.

SECTION XVII.

The Conservation of Believers illustrated, from the History of Israel.—The Perpetuity of God's Love to the Seed of Jacob.—His Faithfulness.—The Stability of his Covenant.—His Love to David.—Israel united to God, as a Peculiar People.—A Precious Seed still preserved among them.—The Spirit given to them.—Israel saved at the Intercession of his Servants.—Preserved by a constant Exercise of Almighty Power, by the Hand of the Angel promised as their Leader.

THE doctrine of the preservation of all believers, in a state of grace, is most clearly taught in the word of God, affords the most abundant ground of consolation, and will furnish all who truly understand it with the most powerful excitement to duty. This precious truth has been a thousand times illustrated from a variety of doctrinal passages of Scripture. It has been shown that all real Christians are secured in their gracious state, by virtue of the everlasting and sovereign love of God, by his faithfulness, by the immutability of his covenant, by the merit of the Redeemer, by their union to him, and to the Father in him, by the incorruptible seed of the word remaining in them, by the inhabitation of his Spirit, by the intercession of Christ, and as kept by almighty power. It is unnecessary, and it would be a deviation from the design of this work, to attempt an illustration of these arguments in a doctrinal manner. But it is worthy of particular attention, that the Spirit of inspiration, even in the historical parts of Scripture, supplies us with illustrations precisely of the same kind ; only adapted to the peculiar circumstances of God's ancient people. Now, as we have formerly seen, that they prefigured the true Israel ; their history, in this respect, is undoubtedly meant for the confirmation of our faith.

1. The perpetuity of God's *love* is assigned as the reason why he would not forsake the seed of Jacob, notwithstanding their iniquities. The sovereignty of this love also beams forth with distinguished lustre, in his conduct towards them. Both these characters are clearly expressed in the message delivered by the prophet Jeremiah ; " Thus saith the LORD, The people which " were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness, even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest. The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with " an everlasting love : therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn " thee."ⁿ That same sovereignty of love, which was at first displayed in the choice of this " nation not desirable,"^o was conspicuous in their continued preservation, although they were still provoking the God of their mercy. How lively a figure of the

permanent manifestation of the same adorable character towards all his spiritual Israel ! It is only because he " rests in his love," and because this love still triumphantly overlooks our continued demerit, that he does not destroy us.

The Israelites are taught to ascribe their redemption from Egypt, not merely in general, but in all the several steps of it, to sovereign grace. The frequent repetitions, in the hundred and thirty-sixth Psalm, are by no means " vain repetitions." This is the principal note in their anthem of praise ; " For his mercy " endureth for ever." For it is not so much the design of God, that his people should commemorate the deliverance itself, as the cause of it. Without this, he hath no glory ; men view even his greatest works only in a selfish light, as subservient to their interest, not as displaying his adorable perfections. In this psalm, his mercy is celebrated in those things in which it may appear there was no mercy ; in overthrowing Pharaoh and his host, in destroying Sihon and Og. But as his mercy was displayed towards Israel in the literal deliverance ; it shadowed forth his special mercy towards his redeemed people, in the destruction of all their spiritual enemies, that they may " serve him without fear."

But they were not only to celebrate his sovereign mercy in the various steps of one deliverance ; they were to ascribe all their deliverances to the same cause. As we have already seen, they needed a perpetual display of the same unmerited love.^p

II. Is the *faithfulness* of God to his promise another ground of security to his people ? Similar was the display of his faithfulness to the typical Israel. They dealt unfaithfully towards him. But without considering their guilt as an obstacle to the manifestation of his grace, he " remembered his holy promise."^q Thus had they reason to testify, after long experience ; " There " hath not failed one word of all his good promise which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant."^r

God would not suffer Balaam to curse Israel, notwithstanding all his sacrifices ; nor would he himself curse them, notwithstanding all the devices employed by that wicked prophet to subject them to divine indignation, by seducing them to sin. He was forced to exclaim ; " Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel."^s Long after this event, the Lord reminds Israel of it, that they might be convinced of the rectitude of his conduct, and of his faithfulness towards them : " O my people, remember now what Balak king " of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered " him from Shittim unto Gilgal, that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord."^t On this part of their history, Moses makes the following reflection : " The Lord thy God would not

^p Numb. xiv. 19.

^s Numb. xxiii. 23

^q Psal. cv. 42.

^t Micah vi. 5.

^r 1 Kings viii. 56.

“hearken to Balaam : but the LORD thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the LORD thy God loved thee.”^u And is it not thus that he still deals with his true Israel? Satan, like his servant Balaam, tempts the saints to sin, accuses them to God, and exerts himself to the utmost to prevail with God to curse them, by breaking his gracious promise. But their loving father overrules the temptations of this adversary, and even their falls, for their good. By these he teaches them watchfulness, humility and dependence on himself. He increases their stock of Christian experience : and thus, in various respects, “turns the curse into a blessing.”

III. The stability of the *covenant* was another ground of the security of Israel. When God describes them “as pining away in their iniquity in their enemies lands,” he adds ; “If they shall confess their iniquity,—then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember ; and I will remember the land. The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her Sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them : and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity ; because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes. And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them : for I am the LORD their God.”^v Thus we perceive, that the severest visitations of the Jews, even that of their captivity in Babylon, were within the compass of the everlasting covenant : not meant for disannulling this, but in subserviency to it. Even when he remembered the land, so as to cause it to enjoy those sabbatical years which had been neglected through the disobedience of his people, he at the same time remembered his covenant with them, overruling their adversities for their good. The covenant he remembered, being that made with Abraham, was, as to its principal substance, the same covenant of grace made in Christ with all the spiritual Israel. Hence the rod, with which he smote them, was the chastening of sons.

That covenant of royalty, which God made with David, was an illustrious type of the covenant of grace. It was indeed one special medium of the administration of this covenant under the Old Testament ; and eminently subservient to the more spiritual and glorious administration of it under the New. In this covenant of royalty, God graciously engaged to his servant, that he should never want a man to sit on his throne. This covenant he confirmed by his oath : “Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me.”^w In reference to Solomon it is said : “I will be his father, and he shall be my son.” Even

^u Deut. xxiii. 5.

^v Lev. xxvi. 39—44.

^w Psal. lxxxix. 35, 36.

his great apostacy was not to deprive him of this parental love, as God declared to David: "If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men; but my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee."^x

These two princes, Saul and David, appear as emblems of the first, and of the last Adam. The characters of the legal, and of the evangelical covenant, are illustrated by their history. Saul was acceptable to Israel, as pleasing the carnal eye,^y but not approved of God; David was chosen of Him, but despised by the people, who were subjected to him only in consequence of the display of his power, and the reduction of the house of Saul. The kingdom was lost to Saul, and to his posterity, on account of one act of disobedience; and so completely lost, that there was no possibility of restoration.^z The reduction of the power of this family, however, was gradual, and the result of many struggles. "There was long war betwixt the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker."^a When David was established in the kingdom, none of the family of Saul could partake of any favour, but as holding of him, and as debtors to his bounty.

Is it not thus as to the two covenants? We naturally prefer salvation by works. The idea pleases the pride of our hearts. But we are unwilling to say; "Thine are we, O David!" We will never sincerely utter this language, till the power of the law as a covenant be broken, till we be loosed from its yoke, and learn, by the light of the Spirit, that Jesus is He of whom the Father hath said; "By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel,—out of the hand of all their enemies."^b—"By one of—fence many were made sinners." The way of salvation by the covenant of works is for ever barred. God eternally rejected the first Adam as a head of life to his posterity. The second Adam indeed could not fail. But his seed are chargeable with manifold iniquities. His mercy, however, departs not from them, as it was taken from the first Adam, according to the tenor of the covenant of works. The calamities of all who continue the seed of the first Adam, like those of the posterity of Saul, are penal. But behold the character of the new covenant in the afflictions of the family of David: "I will visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips."^c What could be the design of this, but to shew the stability of the covenant of grace, and to declare in the liveliest manner, by pattern, that he would not utterly for-

^x 2 Sam. vii. 14, 15.

^a 2 Sam. iii. 1.

^y 1 Sam. x. 23, 24.

^b Ver. 18.

^z Chap. xv. 23.

^c Psal. lxxxix. 32—34.

sake any who belong to it, or suffer them to fall totally or finally away from him? Hence the blessings of this covenant, as purchased by the death, and confirmed by the resurrection of Christ, are all designed "the sure mercies of David."^d

None of the posterity of the first Adam can have life, as holding of him. They can receive it only by a new tenure, as becoming the seed of the second Adam; as being absolute debtors to his mercy; like Mephibosheth, "eating bread always at his table."^e But in the soul of the Christian there are still two opposite interests. "What will ye see in the Shulamite? as it were the company of two armies?"^f The advancement of grace is often very slow, sometimes imperceptible; but its final victory is certain. The elder shall serve the younger. There are many hard combats: but the house of David shall wax stronger and stronger, while that of Saul becomes weaker and weaker.

The Spirit of inspiration frequently marks a very important distinction between the conduct of God towards the house of Israel, consisting of the ten tribes which revolted from the family of David, and that towards the house of Judah. In the course of two hundred and fifty-four years, the throne of the ten tribes had passed through nine different families. Various kinds of carnal policy were employed by Jeroboam the son of Nebat; as the change of religion, of the place of sacrifice, and of the priesthood. These succeeded so far as to keep the ten tribes from returning to the dominion of the house of David; but they could not secure the succession in any one family. Nor could all the cruelties exercised by Jehu and others, towards the seed-royal, give any greater security. During this period, the family of David, without any interruption, possessed the kingdom of Judah. Not till an hundred and thirty-four years after the destruction of the kingdom of Israel, were the Jews carried captive to Babylon. Even in Babylon, the royal authority was not entirely taken away from the house of David. After seventy years, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, with a few adherents from the remains of the ten tribes, were allowed to return to Palestine, and to enjoy a government of their own. Although this government differed in its form from that which preceded the captivity, the supreme authority still continued in the family of David. Nor was it entirely withdrawn from this family, till about the time of our Saviour's appearance; when it was necessary that the prophecy of Jacob should be fulfilled. The sceptre did not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, till Shiloh came.

Did we view things with the carnal eye, it would appear surprising, and indeed unaccountable, that the throne of Judah should be more stable than that of Ephraim. The former had far less extent of territory than the latter. It could bear no comparison as to the number of subjects. Of consequence, its temporal re-

^d Isa. lv. 3; Acts xiii. 34.

^e 2 Sam. ix. 10.

^f Song vi. 13.

sources were greatly inferior. Shall we conclude, therefore, that the kingdom of Judah was preserved because of the superior worth of the princes, or piety of the people? Such a conclusion would be entirely contrary to the history given in the sacred records. If we compare the character of Judah with that of the ten tribes, when the latter were carried captive, we will discern no ground of preference. Yet the Israelites were deprived of their national character; while the Jews were preserved. The former were carried into a captivity from which they have never yet returned; but the captivity of the latter continued only for seventy years. Both are said to be cast out of his sight. But the rejection of the ten tribes was penal, that of the Jews merely corrective. The one was total, the other only temporary. Of the Israelites it is said; "They left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantment, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight, there was *none left but the tribe of Judah only*. And Judah kept not the commandments of the LORD their God, but *walked in the statutes of Israel* which they made. And the LORD *rejected all the seed of Israel*, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight."^g It was in the reign of Hoshea that the Israelites were carried captive. Contemporary with him was Ahaz king of Judah. Now, observe his character. "He walked in the ways of the king of Israel, and made also molten images for Baalim. Moreover, he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. He sacrificed also, and burnt incense on the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree." But although the LORD chastised the Jews, by suffering many of them to be taken captive by the Israelites, he immediately delivered them from this captivity; while he gave up their spoilers to a perpetual desolation.^h If there was any preference between these guilty nations, it belonged to the ten tribes: because, instead of being warned by their awful fate, the Jews continued in the same wicked course; or when they professed to repent, did it hypocritically. "I saw," saith God, "when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery, I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce: yet her treacherous sister feared not, but went and played the harlot also.—Yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the LORD. And the LORD said unto me, The back-

^g 2 Kings xvii. 16—20.

^h 2 Chron. xxviii. 2—15.

"sliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah."ⁱ

There is thus no room left to suppose, that God rejected the ten tribes because of their apostacy, and retained that of Judah, as faithfully adhering to him. Both apostatized ; and Judah is represented as the most guilty of the two. What reason then can we assign for the difference of their fate ? God was pleased to display his own sovereignty. "He *refused* the tabernacle of Joseph, and *chose not* the tribe of Ephraim : but *chose* the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved."^k As little are we to imagine that he left the Israelites, because they refused to return to his ordinances ; and preserved the Jews, because they obeyed his voice in forsaking their courses of apostacy. For we have seen that Judah turned only *feignedly*. He could just as easily have retained the ten tribes in adherence to his worship, or recovered them from their apostacy, as he did the Jews. But he would make it evident that the preservation of his ordinances proceeded solely from himself ; and that the safety of Judah depended on his immutable covenant ; whereas the kingdom of Ephraim had no such security. "Jehoram walked in the way of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab.—Howbeit the LORD *would* not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that he had made with David, and as he promised to give a light to him and to his sons for ever."^l

We have thus a remarkable figure of the difference of the divine conduct towards those who make the same profession. He suffers some to "draw back to perdition," while he preserves others, or reclaims them from many partial apostacies, although in themselves no better than the former. He shews that it is He only who "maketh to differ." The light of one he permits to be extinguished ; that of another he makes to "shine more and more unto a perfect day." He hath been pleased to leave the one under the power of the old covenant. The other hath been brought into the bond of the new ; and notwithstanding daily departures, and sometimes of a very heinous nature, he "remembers his holy covenant."

He afflicts them for their iniquities ; but it is in measure. "Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that smote him ? or is he slain according to the slaughter of those that are slain by him ? In measure when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it : he stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east-wind. By this, therefore, shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin."^m No period is limited in the threatenings of the desolations of Ephraim. But as Tyre was to be "forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king,"ⁿ God would suffer Judah to be afflicted only for the same

ⁱ Jer. iii. 8—11.

^k Psal. lxxviii. 67, 69.

^l 2 Chron. xxi. 6, 7.

^m Isa. xxvii. 7—9.

ⁿ Chap. xxiii. 15.

period, that is, during the ordinary term of the life of man, the days of whose years are threescore years and ten :o as if he would give us an emblem of the afflictions of his own children, which continue only during the present life, in which they receive all their "evil things,"^h whereas the punishment of others is eternal.

iv. The Lord continued his kindness to Judah, for *David's sake*. It is generally allowed, that he was the most illustrious personal type of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is often expressly called by his name ;^g and in this respect he eminently prefigured him, that, after his death, many signal mercies were conferred on his kingdom for his sake. On this account God would not utterly cut off the tribe of Judah, nor even dethrone his posterity, notwithstanding their wickedness. Solomon was chargeable with great apostacy. But the Lord would not deprive him of any part of the kingdom, nor his son of the whole, "for David his servant's sake."^r Abijam, one of his descendants, was a wicked king. "Nevertheless, for David's sake did the Lord his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem : because David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite."^s Joram "walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab. —Yet the Lord would not destroy Judah for David his servant's sake."^t

God had respect to the obedience and sufferings of this man "after his own heart." He allowed his people to use this as their plea : "Lord, remember David and all his afflictions. For thy servant David's sake, turn not away the face of thine anointed." Nor was their plea rejected. This was his gracious answer ; "There will I make the horn of David to bud : I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed. His enemies will I clothe with shame : but upon himself shall his crown flourish."^u "My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven."^v

David at times seems to plead his own merit, and to speak in language inconsistent with that sense of unworthiness which he elsewhere expresses, and which always becomes a transgressor. One while we find him saying, "The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me."^w At another time he speaks very

o Psal. xc. 10.

^h Luke xvi. 25.

^g Jer. xxx. 9. ;

Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24 ; xxxvii. 24—28 ; Hos. iii. 5.

^r 1 Kings xi. 12, 13, 32, 34.

^s 1 Kings xv. 1—5.

^t 2 Kings viii. 18, 19.

^u Psal. cxxxii. 1, 10, 17, 18.

^v Psal. lxxxix. 28, 29.

^w Psal. xvii. 20.

differently ; “ Enter not into judgment with thy servant : for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.”^x Did the royal prophet contradict himself ? No, surely. But in the latter passage, he speaks properly in his own person, as a sinful man. In the former, he personates the just One, whose “ word was in his tongue.”

As God promised that he would not destroy Judah for David’s sake, he gives his people a precious type of the ground on which he preserves them in a state of grace, notwithstanding the multitude of their provocations. It is not for their own, but for Christ’s sake. He ever remembers all the *afflictions* of our New-Testament David, his obedience unto death. Therefore he will not utterly cast us off although we daily deserve it.

Under the Old Testament, the Messiah, although not yet come, was exhibited as the safeguard of the Church in that period. When, because of prevailing wickedness, a powerful confederacy was formed by Syria and Israel, for the utter destruction of Judah, so that both king and people were ready to despair of deliverance ; they were both directed to the promised Messiah as their blessed security. “ The LORD himself shall give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”^y To the same quarter were they directed to look for deliverance from the powerful army of the king of Assyria, whose irruption is thus foretold, by an allusion to an overwhelming inundation ; “ He shall pass through Judah, he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck, and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.” But their defence lay in this very name. The relation which the land bore to him who was called by it, was the great demonstration of the arrogance, impiety, and folly of the invader. This was the *land of Immanuel*. Its inhabitants, therefore, have the language of defiance and of triumph put in their mouths : “ Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces ; and give ear, all ye of far countries : gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together and it shall come to nought ; speak the word, and it shall not stand : *for God is with us*.”^z Here we have at once the interpretation of the name *Immanuel*, and the mystery of their preservation. The same ground of security, against destruction from the same scourge, is otherwise expressed afterwards : “ O my people, that dwelleth in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian : he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt.” But he shall be no more able to effect thy destruction, than was Egypt. Thy deliverance shall resemble that which thou hadst from Pharaoh. “ The LORD of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him : and as his rod was upon the sea, so shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt,” with a destruction equal-

^x Psal. cxliii. 2.

^y Isa. vii. 14.

^z Chap. viii. 8—10.

ly sudden and complete. "It shall come to pass in that day, "that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and "his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of *the anointing*."*

So intimate is the connexion between the type and the antitype, that often, in the language of prophecy, the description rises in so wonderful a manner, either gradually or all at once, that we lose sight of the sign in the thing signified. Thus, the evangelical prophet, when proclaiming the deliverance of his nation from the yoke of Babylon by means of Cyrus, and the confusion of idolaters, suddenly expresses himself as if he had been all along speaking of the great salvation : "I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways : he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives.—They shall be ashamed, and be also confounded all of them : they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols. But Israel shall be saved *in the Lord* with an *everlasting* salvation : ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end."^a This prophecy concerning the salvation of Israel could with no propriety be understood of the deliverance from Babylon. It can only respect that salvation of which Christ is the author ; that salvation, of which it is an essential and unalienable character, that it is *eternal*.^b Here the type brightens into the antitype ; the shadow disappears, and the substance breaks forth into view.

v. The *union* of Israel unto God, as a peculiar people, was another ground of security. The Lord avouched them to be his peculiar people.^c They were "a people near unto him."^d He confirmed to himself his people Israel, to be a people unto him for ever.^e They were joined to him by an everlasting espousal, so that he became the husband of the Church ;^f whence all her apostacy from him is represented under the notion of adultery. She bore the name of her divine husband, as a wife does among men, because legally viewed as one with him : "The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto himself.—And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the "name of the Lord."^g They enjoyed all the benefit of this union in relation to the Messiah. It was "because of the *anointing*" already mentioned. Therefore Christ and his ancient Church are often spoken of as one. There is a mutual interchange of names between them. The glorious Head, and the members of the Church are often exhibited, as if they constituted only one person. His name is transferred to them. They are the *Christs*, the anointed of God.^h Elsewhere he condescends to adopt their name. The characters, which in one place are appropriated to

* Isaiah x. 24—27.

^b Heb. v. 9.

^d Psal. cxlviii. 14.

^f Isa. liv. 5 ; Hos. ii. 19, 20.

^h Psal. cv. 16.

^a Chap. xlv. 13, 16, 17.

^c Deut. xxvi. 18.

^e 2 Sam. vii. 24.

^g Deut. xxviii. 9. 10.

the Church, are in another applied to her Lord. "Thou Israel art *my servant*, Jacob whom I have *chosen*, the seed of Abraham my friend. Thou art my servant, I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away."^k—"Behold, my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth."^l They were made partakers of this distinguishing privilege, and of all the benefits flowing from it, only in consequence of the sovereign choice of JEHOVAH.^m Therefore he would not annul all that he had done for them in his sovereign mercy; as he declared by the prophet Samuel; "For the LORD will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people."ⁿ Even Balaam was assurd of this: "He hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it."^o

Can it be denied, that we have here a lively figure of that grace of union which is conferred on all the spiritual Israel, and of the blessed security connected with it? They are "a peculiar people."^p They are "made nigh by the blood of Christ."^q united to the Father as their God and Father in him. They are married to Jesus as their husband, betrothed unto him for ever.

In as far as Christians depart from their holy profession, they have the same character given to them, which we find so often applied to God's ancient people. They are "adulterers and adulteresses."^r In common with their Lord, all true believers bear the honourable name of Christ.^t They are viewed as one in law with him; as dead and risen with him; as partakers of the same complete justification, of which his resurrection was the evidence; as "made the righteousness of God in him." By virtue of this union, they are eternally freed from condemnation. For "there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." God hath blessed, and who can *reverse* it? "It is God that justifieth, and who is he that condemneth?" All this blessedness flows from their election. They are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, according as God hath chosen them in him before the foundation of the world."^u

vi. God would not altogether destroy his ancient people, because there was still a precious *seed* reserved among them. In the worst times the Lord retained a tithe for himself. Hence even with respect to a time when there should "be a great forsaking in the midst of the land," it is promised; "Yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a tall tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the *holy seed* shall be the substance thereof."^v—Thus saith the LORD, as the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servant's sake, that I may not destroy them all."^w In like man-

^k Isa. xli. 8, 9. ^l Isa. xlii. 1.; Mat. xii. 18. ^m Deut. vii. 6.

ⁿ 1 Sam. xii. 22. ^o Numb. xxiii. 20. ^p 1 Pet. ii. 9.

^q Eph. ii. 13. ^r Eph. v. 22.; Hos. ii. 18.

^s Jam. iv. 4. ^t 1 Cor. xii. 12. ^u Eph. i. 3.

^v Isa. vi. 13. ^w Isa. lrv. 8.

ner, the child of God "cannot work sin;" he cannot again fall under its dominion, and be subjected to the curse; "for his seed remaineth in him."^x He is "born of the incorruptible seed of the word."^y He therefore cannot sin, unto death."^z This is an essential character of the seed of the word, that it preserves from the total corruption in which the unrenewed lie, and from that final apostacy into which they fall.

VII. It was one of the distinguishing privileges of the Israelites, that God gave them his *Spirit*. Besides the gracious operations of the Spirit, which were confined to the elect among them, his influences were communicated, for the benefit of Israel in general, in a variety of ways. He was given as a Spirit of inspiration to the penmen of Scripture, for the instruction of the Church, as Nehemiah acknowledges: "Thou gavest thy good Spirit to instruct them."^a He was communicated as a Spirit of prophecy, and also of miraculous operation. By him were men supplied with an extraordinary degree of bodily strength, with wisdom for government, with fortitude for war, with eminent qualifications for works of art.^b They "rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit." Yet he still continued among them: and this is pointed out as a special ground of consolation under trial, and as an antidote against fear. When the Jews were disheartened, because the glory of their second temple was so far inferior to that of the first, the following message was delivered by the prophet Haggai; "I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts: according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not."^c They enjoyed the presence of God in this respect, as a pledge of preservation from total destruction: "*I am with thee*, saith the LORD, to save thee; though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee."^d

This was undoubtedly a blessed emblem of the safety of all believers, as "builded up for an habitation of God through the Spirit." He is conferred on them in all his gifts and graces, according to the state of the Church, or their peculiar calls. He acts in them all, as "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ." He supplies them with fortitude in their spiritual warfare; and by him they are "strengthened with all might in the inner man." Some, like Bezaleel and Aholiab of old, are furnished with peculiar gifts for labouring in the work of the sanctuary.^e Often do his people provoke their gracious God. But he deals with them, as he did with David. He casts them not away from his presence; nor takes his Holy Spirit from them. On the contrary, he brings them to evangelical repent-

^x 1 John iii. 9.

^a Neh. ix. 20.

^c Hag. ii. 4, 5.

^y 1 Pet. i. 23.

^b See Owen on the Spirit, B. ii. Chap. 1.

^d Jer. xxx. 11.

^z 1 John v. 16, 18.

^e Exod. xxxi. 1—6.

ance, thus restores to them the joy of his salvation, and upholds them with his *free* Spirit;^f with the influences of that Spirit, who is no less sovereign in all his operations on the renewed soul, than he was in the work of regeneration itself. The very design of the mission of this gracious Comforter, is that he may abide with them for ever;^g and “seal” them, as the LORD’s peculiar treasure, “unto the day of redemption.”^h

VIII. God often saved Israel, in the day of their provocation, or of their danger, at the *intercession* of his servants. Thus Moses interceded for the people, when God threatened to destroy them because of their idolatry; and afterwards, when they murmured at the report of the spies: and in both instances his intercession was successful.ⁱ When they rebelled because of the display of divine vengeance against Korah and his associates, and the plague brake forth among them, Aaron ran into the midst of the congregation, with his flaming censer in his hand, and made atonement. He “stood between the living and the dead, and the plague was stayed.”^k David, in like manner, after he had himself provoked the LORD by numbering the people, made intercession, as he also offered sacrifices. “So the LORD was entreated “for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.”^l

Many other instances might be given of the success of intercession in the experience of Israel. But it is evident, that these three persons, in all the instances mentioned, acted expressly as types of Christ; and as prefiguring both the truth, and the success, of his intercession. Moses acted as a Mediator between God and his people; Aaron as “the saint, the holy One, of God;” David as his Anointed. There was something highly emblematical in the very circumstances of their intercession. Moses proposed to make an atonement for the sin of Israel. He, as has been seen in a former section, expressed his resolution to devote himself for them. “If thou wilt,” he says, “forgive their sin: and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou has written.” The man of God seems determined either to perish with, or for, his beloved Israel; unwilling to enjoy any mercy that he might not hold in common with them. Aaron rushed in between the vengeance of the Almighty and offending Israel. He substituted himself as a mark for the arrows of divine wrath. David did the same. When he saw the angel that smote the people, he said unto the LORD; “Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me.” In all this, do we not see the character, and the conduct of the good Shepherd, who laid down his life for the sheep, who intercedes for them on the ground of the atonement he hath made? “If any

^f Psal. li. 12, 13.

^g John xiv. 16.

^h Eph. i. 13, 14; iv. 30.

ⁱ Exod. xxxii. 10, 30.—³²; Numb. xiv. 11—20.

^k Numb. xvi. 47, 48.

^l 2 Sam. xxiv. 17, 25.

"man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins."^m Satan would have us, that he might sift us as wheat: and when he sists, he wishes to retain nothing but the chaff in his sieve. But Jesus prays for us, that our faith fail not.ⁿ "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son: much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life,"^o as our interceding High-priest. Did the LORD say to Moses, "I have pardoned according to thy word?" And may we not be assured, that the Father grants to the true Mediator "all his heart's desire;" and particularly when he asks in behalf of his people "life of him, even length of days for ever and ever?"^p Did he accept of the typical sacrifices, and of the smoke of incense, as making atonement? Were these of any worth in his sight? No, surely; but in as far as they prefigured the perfect atonement and ever-prevalent intercession of our glorious Surety.

ix. The ancient people of God were preserved from destruction, by a constant exercise of almighty power, by the hand of that Angel whom he promised as their leader. This glorious Angel, as has been formerly observed, was no other than our Lord Jesus Christ, acting as "the Messenger of the covenant;" and, according to the character of that dispensation, figuratively manifesting the nature of his office with respect to all who are Israelites indeed. Concerning him the Father declared; "Behold, I send an angel before thee, to *keep thee in the way*, and *to bring thee into the place which I have prepared.*"^q It was this angel of God's presence, who "saved them,—bare them and carried them all the days of old."^r He exercised unremitted watchfulness over them. Hence it is said; "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved.—Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep."^s His tender care of his people is represented under the most expressive metaphors. He appeared as the "Shepherd of Israel, who led Joseph as a flock."^t He had promised to Abraham that to his seed he would give "all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession."^u—He accordingly "led them on safely, so that they feared not;—and he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, even to this mountain which his right hand had purchased."^v He led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the LORD alone did lead him."^w It was the privilege of the literal Israel, as being externally "an holy people," to be preserved by Christ; as Moses sings: "Yea, he loved the people; all his

^m 1 John ii. 1, 2.

^p Psal. xxi. 2, 4.

^q Psal. cxxi. 3, 4.

^r Psal. lxxviii. 53, 54.

ⁿ Luke xxii. 31, 32.

^o Exod. xxiii. 20.

^p Psal. lxxx. i.

^o Rom. v. 10.; Heb. vii. 25.

^r Isa. lxiii. 9.

^u Gen. xvii. 8.

^w Deut. xxxii. 10—12.

"saints are in thy hand."^x As really as his mercy was conspicuous in their redemption, his power was displayed in their continued preservation: "Thou in thy *mercy* hast led forth the people whom thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy *strength* unto thy holy habitation."^y

Often, as the punishment of their iniquities, he suffered them to be for a time led captive by their heathen foes, whom he "left to prove Israel." But when they cried unto him, he still delivered them.^z The lamp that God lighted up among them, often became, through their own wickedness, like "a smoking flax." But he would not suffer it at any time to be totally extinguished, because it was ordained for his anointed. Their preservation, indeed, seems to be solely the effect of one continued miracle. Nothing but the wonderful operation of divine power could have preserved them in Egypt, when the whole nation conspired for their destruction. During forty years were they miraculously supported in the wilderness. The heavens gave them bread, and the flinty rock supplied them with water. Had their nourishing dew been withheld, or the rock been dried up, for a few days; the whole people must have perished. Although supported by ordinary means, after they were brought to Canaan their deliverances were often entirely miraculous; and their continued preservation, in the midst of so many powerful nations, that still sought to destroy them, can scarcely be viewed in any other light.

Now, as we are certain that this tender care was no ways merited by Israel, it is no less evident that all the glory that redounded to God, from the displays of his mercy and power, in their outward deliverance, cannot reasonably be viewed as an object in itself sufficiently worthy of the means employed. If we do not view their wonderful preservation as strictly typical of the preservation of a people formed by God for himself, in a far superior way to shew forth his praise; we must be for ever at a loss to perceive infinite wisdom in this series of miracles.—It would seem to be but a waste of mercy and of power, if they were never meant to subserve some higher end. But for our sakes especially were these things done, and for our sakes were they written, that we might know that our help cometh only from the Lord.

The very language, which is used in the Old Testament with respect to the preservation of this peculiar people, is in the New, appropriated to them who believe. The same Angel of the covenant establishes his saints, and *keeps* them from evil.^a He could testify to his Father, that, while he was in the world, he had kept them in his name.^b While about to leave it, he said to

^x Deut. xxxiii. 3.
^a 2 Thes. iii. 3.

^y Exod. xv. 13.
^b John xvii. 12.

^z Judg. iii. 1, 9, 15. vi. 6, 14. &c.

them ; “ I go to *prepare* a place for you. And—I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.”^c As “ the good Shepherd, he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out : and when he putteth forth his own sheep, he *goeth before* them.” Concerning them he graciously saith ; “ I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of *my hand*.”^d When they are begotten again, it is “ to a lively hope,—to an inheritance” far surpassing that which was its figure, “ an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them, who are kept by “ the power of God, through faith unto salvation.”^e That gift of the Spirit, of which we have already spoken, is evidently described in language borrowed from the typical mercies of Israel. It is “ the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession.”^f All who are “ sanctified by God the Father,” are “ preserved in Christ Jesus.”^g He does not entirely deliver them from their spiritual enemies. He “ slays them not, lest his people should forget.”^h Paul, as a renewed person, thus declares his experience ; “ I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” Hence his people complain of wretchedness. But by faith they are assured of deliverance through Jesus Christ their Lord.ⁱ Grace in their souls is often as “ a smoking flax.” But so gracious is their almighty Redeemer, that the “ smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto “ victory.”^k

If a miracle be something entirely beyond the power of nature, what is the preservation of the children of God but a continued miracle ? As they were at first “ born from above,” the whole of those supplies that are necessary for the support of this life, come from the same quarter. They feed on “ the hidden manna.” They drink of “ the pure river of the water of life.” They continue in a wilderness, where there is neither bread nor water for their souls. They are encompassed with pits, and snares, and beasts of prey ; constantly fighting with enemies, and especially with a body of sin in their own hearts. The power that preserves them from perishing, in such circumstances, is entirely supernatural.

The doctrine of divine conservation affords encouragement to the children of God, when labouring under a sense of guilt that threatens to overwhelm them, or when they may be apt to conclude that sin is about to regain its empire in their hearts.—

^c John xiv. 2, 3.

^f Eph. i. 14.

ⁱ Rom. vii. 23—25.

^d Chap. x. 3, 4, 28.

^g Jude 1.

^k Matth. xii. 20.

^e 1 Pet. 1, 3—5.

^h Psal. lix. 11.

Those who never felt the arrows of the Almighty, or who still continue strangers to the dreadful power of sin in the soul, may depreciate this doctrine as at best unprofitable. But it cannot be viewed in this light by any who know what is meant by "a wounded spirit," or who have been "tossed with tempest." In such a situation, a believing view of the eternity and immutability of divine love, of its sovereignty as overlooking our continued unworthiness, can alone give relief. Hither also must we turn our eye for comfort, when sin rages and threatens to destroy.—This is the consolation that God himself exhibits: "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are—under grace.—He that hath begun a good work, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ."

We may also learn, that although the believer is secured in a state of grace, no room is left for the indulgence of carnal security, no encouragement is given to continue in sin. Many decry this doctrine, as if it were adverse to the interests of holiness. The contrary is clear from the history of God's ancient people. Even while he proclaimed the eternity of his love, he denounced the severest judgments as the punishment of apostacy; and when they actually departed from him, he fulfilled his threatenings. "He delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemies hand." God would not break his covenant with David, notwithstanding his great trespass in the matter of Uriah. But did the divine conduct afford any encouragement to him, or to any believer, to sin? Was not David informed, that therefore the sword should never depart from his house: and was not this threatening awfully verified in succeeding generations?

In a similar manner does he deal with the people of his love, when they provoke him by their iniquities. He withdraws from them the light of his countenance, suffers them to be led into captivity for a time by the power of their lusts, and to lose the persuasion of his covenant-love. They are tried, it may be, ever after with darkness as to their eternal state. The Almighty, perhaps, gives a command to his terrors to "set themselves in array" against them. Or, they are buffeted by Satan, by means of the most horrid temptations. Or, he chastens them outwardly by severe bodily afflictions, by great temporal calamities, affecting their substance or reputation; by removing their dearest earthly comforts, "the desire of their eyes." Can these things be viewed as no check to sin? Is the soul of a Christian cast in such a mould, that nothing but the fear of eternal perdition can prevail with him?

Notwithstanding the declarations of the perpetuity of God's love to his ancient people, they had no encouragement to expect the renewed evidences of this love, unless they returned to him

from whom they had revolted.^k Such is his conduct towards his spiritual Israel. The LORD still says ; “ I will go and return to “ my place, till they acknowledge their iniquity.” According to the divine testimony, they have no reason to expect deliverance from judgments, or the renewed manifestations of his love, without turning from their evil ways.

We may add to these considerations, that when there appeared any thing like true repentance among God’s ancient people, it always especially proceeded from a sense of his love. The great argument, which he employed to enforce, not merely the first precept, but the whole law is founded on the principle of gratitude ; and the very same which he still renders effectual with his children : “ I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee “ out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou “ shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not bow down,” &c. The severest judgments with which they were visited, never brought them back to a sense of duty. When a sincere or general reformation took place, they were principally affected by a discovery of federal love.^l This is a proof, among many others, that the doctrine we have illustrated, instead of being an encouragement to sin, can alone prove a proper incitement to duty. It is thus in the experience of the children of God. When they feel the rod only, they are “ as a bullock unaccustomed to the “ yoke.” But the love of Christ, when shed abroad in their hearts, especially when manifested in its glorious sovereignty and immutability, *constraineth* them.

This doctrine, in a word, supplies us with consolation under the greatest adversities. The LORD often severely afflicted that nation, or that family, which he had chosen. But he did it in love. This was designed for our instruction. How severely soever we may be afflicted, let us not for this reason call in question the love of God. Still he saith to us ; “ I will never leave “ thee.—My love will I not take from him. When thou passest “ through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, “ they shall not overflow thee : when thou walkest through the “ fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flames kindle on “ thee. For I am the LORD *thy God*, the holy One of Israel, *thy “ Saviour.*” We may be fully assured, that even our afflictions, instead of tending to our destruction, are meant in subserviency to our salvation ; that they “ work together for good ;—that when “ we are judged, we are chastened of the LORD, that we should not “ be condemned with the world ;” that he chastens us “ for our “ profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness ;” and that he will at length put this song in our mouths, “ We went through fire “ and through water ; but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy “ place.”

^k Dent. xxx. 1—3. ; 1 Kings viii. 31—54.

^l 2 Chron. xx. 6—9. ; xxx. 6, 9. ; Ezra ix. 8, 9, 13, 15. ; Neh. ix. 7—31. ; Dan. ix. 4, 9, 15, 18.

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